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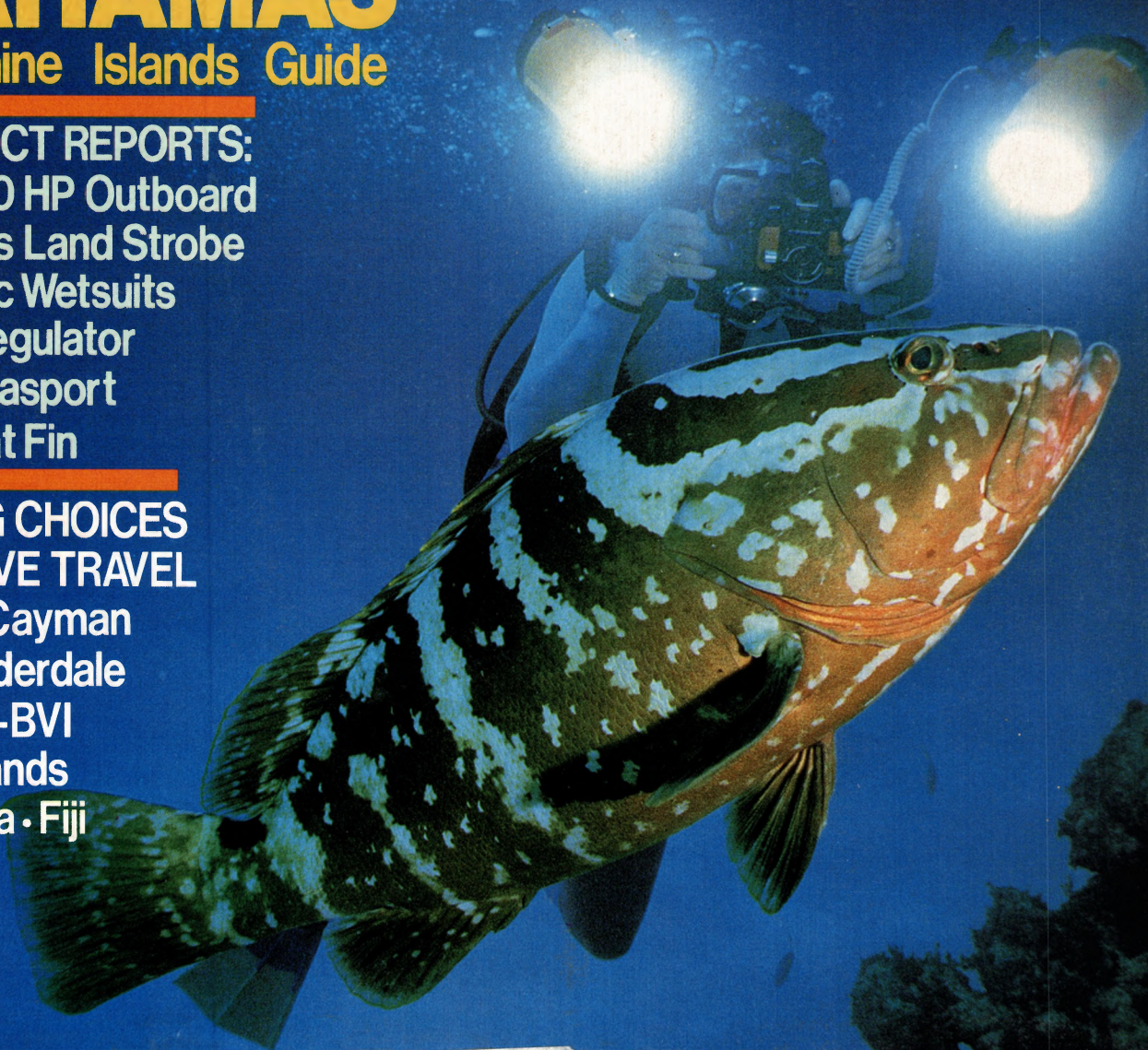
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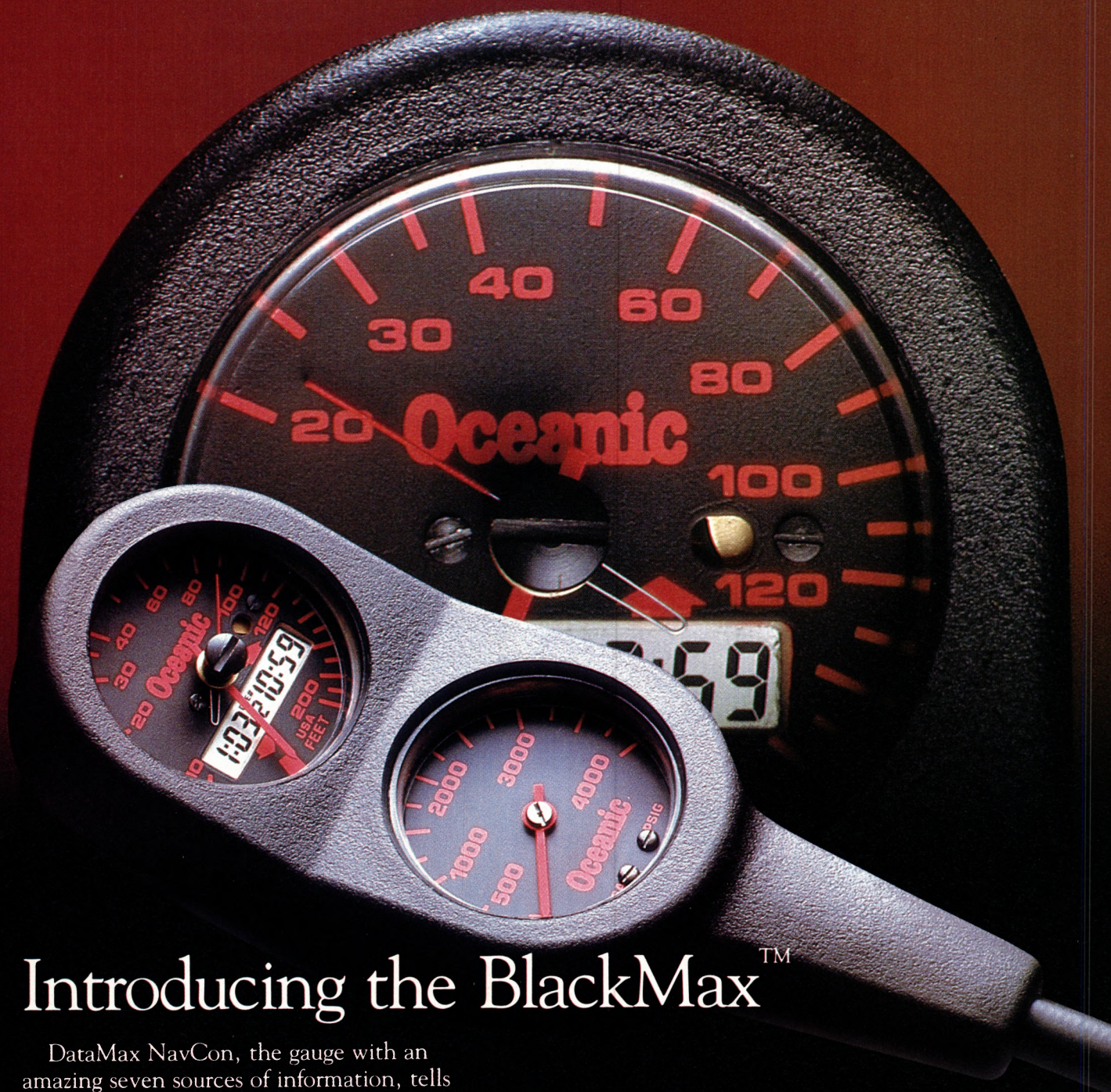
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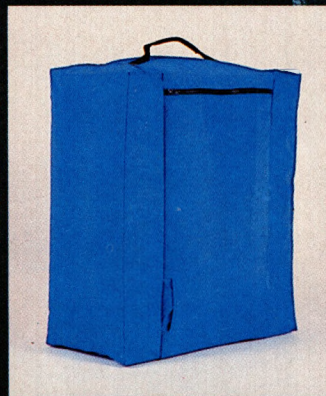
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SDM

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COVER

A diver uses twin strobes to photograph a friendly Nassau grouper on a Bahamas reef. For more on the reefs, wrecks, walls and colorful marine life in this area, plus the topside attractions, see page 47. Photo/Stephen Frink.

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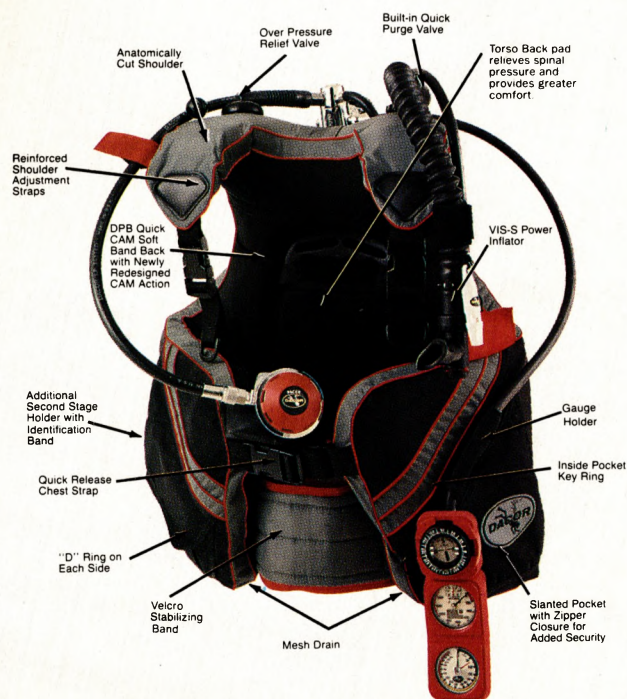
Looking for room on Cayman/Page 78

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SDM Editorial

BY PAUL J. TZIMOULIS

THE FAULT WITH FAT

Most Americans are overfat. This condition comes with age and too much good living. It is a national disease. There is a difference between overfat and overweight. If you are overweight, you are probably overfat as well. However, you can be overfat without being overweight.

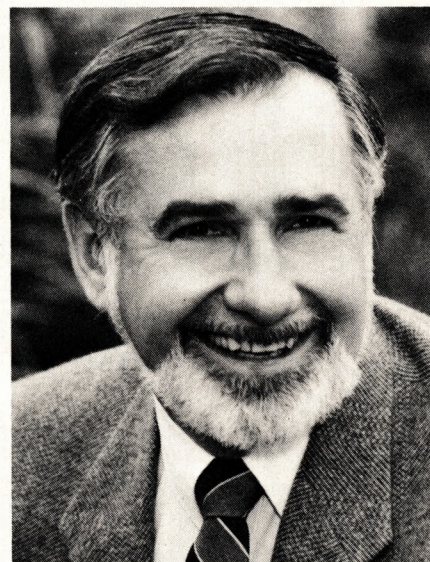
As we grow older, we become more sedentary and less inclined to exercise. The pressures of work and family life help to create a no exercise rut. At age 20 the average athletic male has a body fat content of approximately 20 percent. This is

ideal. By age 40, the same male normally has a body fat content of 30 percent and it gets worse as time goes on. Muscle tissue diminishes and fat expands.

Since half the readers of SKIN DIVER are over the age of 30, it is logical to suspect that overfatness could be a major problem. If you are overfat, there is a good chance you are unfit for strenuous physical activity. This includes diving.

There are many medical problems connected with overweight and overfat—including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc. We won't go into these at this time. But, here is how overfat can directly affect your diving:

Fat floats. Toss a pat of margarine into a bowl of water and you will see that it floats. Margarine is almost pure fat, just like the fat cells in your body. When a diver becomes overfat there is a greater tendency to float. Overfat divers always seem to have difficulty descending or



staying down in shallow water. This extra effort uses more energy and results in greater fatigue. The net result is the need

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to wear more weight.

The amount of lead on most weightbelts increases over the years. Some divers I know wear in excess of 30 pounds. This kind of load exerts greatest stress when the diver is exiting the water or moving around on the boat deck or beach. This stress can result in backaches or increased fatigue.

Another possible side effect of this increased weightbelt load is the risk of muscle strain or injury to joints. Divers carrying too much weight are easily thrown off balance on a rocking boat and can cause themselves (and others) injury. Shed the fat and you can shed the extra lead on your weightbelt.

Another major diving problem connected with fat is the bends. It has often been stated in medical literature that there is a direct correlation between the risk of bends and being overfat.

The *U.S. Navy Diving Manual* states that fatty tissue in the body will absorb about five times as much nitrogen as watery tissues. An overfat diver will absorb a great deal more nitrogen than a lean diver and thus become an overloaded fizz bomb waiting to go off.

Since an overfat diver is likely to be out of condition, this person's circulatory system may not be functioning at 100 per-

cent. Blood circulation is critical to removing dissolved nitrogen from fat tissue and preventing the formation of bends inducing bubbles.

While we may not have all the answers, it seems reasonable to conclude the reduction of fat and improvement of physical fitness can reduce the chance of getting the bends.

The best way to eliminate overfat is to exercise. You can reduce overweight by diet, but it takes muscle activity to eliminate overfat.

The best type of exercise for overfat is aerobic. The most common types of aerobic exercise include walking, jogging, bicycling, running, rowing, cross-country skiing, jumping rope, roller skating or dancing. Activities that do not qualify as aerobic include tennis, golf, racquetball, weightlifting, etc.

In order to be aerobic, the exercise must be sustained for a minimum of 12 to 20 minutes. It is 12 minutes for the most strenuous forms (running) and 20 minutes for the milder forms (walking). The length of time is the most important aspect of the exercise.

Aerobic exercise improves the fat burning efficiency of your muscles. Other benefits include improved circulatory and respiratory performance and the direct

burning off of a few calories.

If you are interested in getting the fat out of your body and beginning an exercise program that will produce the desired effect, buy yourself a copy of the book *Fit or Fat?* by Covert Bailey. This excellent 107 page booklet is available in paperback form. It is published by the Houghton Mifflin Company and is available in book stores.

Next, start your own simple program of regular exercise three to four times per week. If you feel totally out of shape, begin with walking for 20 minutes. As the weeks go on, increase your walking pace to maximum speed and then increase the duration of your walk from 20 to 30 minutes or more.

In the meantime, see your doctor for a complete physical before embarking on a more strenuous program of aerobics. If the doc says you're OK, you can proceed with a more ambitious program of jogging, bicycling and so on.

You may also want to consider joining a health club to engage in a more formalized aerobic program under professional supervision. Exercise is always easier when done with the support of a pro and in the company of a group. The most important thing is to start now and get the fat out. 

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Diver's Calendar

SEA ROVERS CLINIC

The Boston Sea Rovers will present their 33rd annual Underwater Clinic in Boston, Massachusetts **March 7**. The nighttime program will be held at John Hancock Hall and a meet the speaker party will follow. T. Walker Lloyd, oceanographic consultant to Rolex USA, will be MC and Dr. Robert Ballard, chief scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, will be the featured speaker.

The daytime program will be held at the Copley Plaza Hotel. There will be many exhibits. For information contact Bunky Hodge, 174 Beech St., Rockland, MA 02370. 📞

CALIFORNIA PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

A Nikonos 20mm lens is the best of show prize in the first annual California Photographic Competition sponsored by the Channel Islands Underwater Photographic Society. Categories include prints and slides in macro and wide angle, but these photos must have been taken in California. Winning photos will be presented at the CI UPS film festival **March 7** at the Port Hueneme Cultural Center. Jack McKenney is MC for the event.

For information contact Jim Perry, Channel Islands Underwater Photographic Society, P.O. Box 6901, Oxnard, CA 93031. 📞

ATHENS FILM FESTIVAL

The Underwater Research Society of Athens, Greece will present its fourth International Festival of Underwater Film and Photography **March 20-22** in Athens. Films from various organizations and individuals will be presented with themes on marine biology, deepsea drilling, underwater archaeology, diving medicine and more. For information contact the Underwater Research Society, 13-15, Dioharous Str., 16121, Athens, Hellas; telephone (Greece) 72-47-638. 📞

BENEATH THE SEA

The 11th annual Greater New York Underwater Exposition—Beneath the Sea—will be held **March 27-29** at the Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown, New York. There will be exhibits, seminars for divers and nondivers and workshops for U/W photographers, wreck divers and instructors. The evening film festival (at Marymount College) will feature TV personality Storm Field. There will be an underwater photo contest, fin swimming championships, a marine poster contest for children, fashion show and special rescue seminar.

For information contact Beneath the Sea, P.O. Box 644, Rye, New York 10580; (914) 961-2088 (evenings). 📞

CHOCOLATE ABALONE DIVE

Aquarius Dive Shop of Monterey, California will host its third annual California Chocolate Abalone Dive **March 28** in Monterey. Six inch long chocolate abalone are sealed in plastic and placed underwater. Divers collect the abs and later, onshore, collect prizes corresponding to a number on their catch.

Registration is \$15 and forms are available at dive shops in Northern and Central Califor-

nia. Participants must be certified divers or they must free dive during the contest.

Pre-registration is encouraged. For more information contact Aquarius Dive Shop, 2240 Del Monte Avenue, Monterey, CA 93940; (408) 375-1933. 📞

NACD WORKSHOP

The National Association for Cave Diving (NACD) will host its sixth semi-annual workshop **March 28-29** at Manatee Springs State Park, near Chiefland, Florida (Saturday) and Ginnie Springs (Sunday). The workshop is presented to educate scuba diving leaders about the growing sport of cave and cavern diving—and the great need for specialized training before such dives are attempted.

The cost of workshop is \$60 when registering by mail and \$75 thereafter and includes NACD cavern diver certification plus the dive fee at Ginnie Springs.

For information contact NACD, P.O. Box 14492, Gainesville, Florida 32604 or call Judy Bauer (904) 495-9500. 📞

UNDERWATER CANADA '87

The 15th anniversary edition of Underwater Canada will be held **April 3-5** at the Constellation Hotel in Toronto, Canada. The event will feature 150 exhibits, lectures, hands-on workshops, a divers' casino, two dances and Stan Waterman hosting a special film show.

For information contact Underwater Canada '87, 1220 Sheppard Avenue East, Willowdale, Ontario M2K 2X1; (416) 495-4245. 📞

WORLD U/W PHOTO CONTEST

The South Florida Underwater Photography Society is seeking entries for its fourth annual World Underwater Photography Competition, which will be held in conjunction with Oceans Miami Month and the Ocean Expo '87 Film Festival at Planet Ocean in Miami, Florida **April 4-5**. More than \$5,000 in prizes plus plaques and ribbons will be awarded winners in the categories of macro, close-up, close focus-wide angle, wide angle and fresh water. Entries must be received by March 10.

For information contact South Florida Underwater Photography Society, 1141 NE 142nd Street, North Miami, Florida 33161. 📞

TOPSIDE PHOTO CONTEST

Ocean Expo Productions will present its 1987 International Photography Contest in conjunction with Oceans Miami Month and the Ocean Expo '87 Film Festival held at Planet Ocean in Miami, Florida **April 4-5**. Sea related topside photos must be received by March 10.

For information contact Ocean Expo Productions, 1141 NE 142nd Street, North Miami, Florida, 33161. 📞

SCUBA FAIR

Aqua Addicts Dive Club of Northwest Ohio is sponsoring a Scuba Fair **April 11** from 2:00-7:00 pm. There will be displays and seminars. Dave Trotter will be the featured speaker. For information and the fair location contact Dave Schiefer, Rt. 3, Montpelier, Ohio 43543; (419) 485-5059. 📞

skindiver

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The Ship of Fools has sailed again and met its usual fate: sunk for lack of interest—the ninth sinking since 1979! Its worm-eaten cargo, the Abandoned Shipwreck act (H.R. 3558) was deep-sixed when the 99th Congress adjourned without acting on it. The captains of the ship—Congressmen Wright from Texas and Bennett from Florida—went down again with their deranged vessel, something to which they've grown accustomed.

Senator Lowell Weicker from Connecticut signed on as first mate and introduced a Senate version of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act (S-2569). Weicker is the one who, in 1978, proposed that the U-352 (a popular wreck for sport divers, sunk off North Carolina) be blown up in order to protect divers from munitions left aboard it. The inference was that sport divers didn't have enough sense to leave the munition alone. Sport divers banded together to preserve their rights to dive the wreck they discovered, and won the battle—just like they're doing in the skirmish against the Abandoned Shipwreck Act. Weicker doesn't belong aboard the Ship of Fools and I doubt he'll sign on for the next voyage. The Texas clan of politicians and purist, land-locked archaeologists had gotten to him, but he realized the frustrations involved in going to bat for them and had enough savvy to back off and move onto more important issues, such as fighting the disposal of radioactive wastes in the oceans.

The 99th Congress passed a sweeping reform of the federal tax code. It considered a host of foreign policy issues, passed an immigration bill, reauthorized the clean-up of toxic wastes and enacted an anti-drug bill. Its pace was frenzied but productive and nowhere along the way did anybody push for passage of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act.

Big Brother, led by the captains of the Ship of Fools, is putting his arm around our shoulders and saying: "Be good boys and girls. Trust us. We're doing what's good for you and the people of America. Just go along with this bill and everything will be fine."

It will be fine for the bureaucrats and a catastrophe for salvors and sport divers. The Abandoned Shipwreck Act is aimed at restricting and controlling underwater archaeological and historical research voluntarily undertaken by professional and avocational divers in the United States. It unconditionally gives the states ownership of a certain ambiguously defined category of abandoned shipwrecks. It would be a law originating within the federal government and handed over, *carte blanche* to the states!

If divers are prohibited from salvaging old wrecks, many of these vessels will deteriorate on the seabed until all historic records and artifacts are lost. The states and federal government do not have the money nor the manpower to salvage all the wrecks they would prevent enterpris-



Wreck Facts

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

ing divers from exploring and excavating archaeologically. The states don't have necessary added revenues to enforce the act and the federal government isn't about to cough it up.

Some bureaucrats have created a boogey man under the guise of looting. This is a false premise and one that has been attacked repeatedly by the Atlantic Alliance for Maritime Heritage Conservation. A non-profit organization that fights for sport divers' and salvors' rights to free enterprise, the Atlantic Alliance also teaches and promotes proper underwater archaeological techniques and preservation processes. It continues to conduct workshops and seminars. Many

thanks to Charlie McKinney, Duncan Mathewson, Bob Fleming, Joyce Hayward, Jim Jenney, Pam Warner, Howard Tower and others for their untiring efforts in fighting unjustified diver restrictions and educating divers at many workshops.

Alliance efforts are directed toward fighting the politics of distortion that emanate from Washington. This phenomenon results in a few arrogant politicians—who know little about living or archaeology—leaping on a bandwagon for their own benefit. Their motives can be spelled in two words: j-e-a-l-o-u-s-y and p-o-w-e-r. They are jealous of the accomplishments, acclaim and riches acquired by salvors

(Continued on Page 32)



Diving for artifacts such as these could become illegal if the Abandoned Shipwreck Act ever passes. The authorities would never have the time nor funds to examine many wrecks, which would deteriorate until all historic value was lost.

photos/Bonnie J. Cardone

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Photos by LARRY CUSHMAN

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Scuba Quiz

Category: Diving Skills

Topic: Surf Passages

By Dennis Graver

Many divers are greatly surprised the first time they must pass through the surf to go diving. Even those with surf experience in one area are often surprised at the difference in technique used in another area. Test your knowledge of this special skill via the following questions. The answers are on the following page.

1. The surf zone is the area:

- ☐ A. Where the waves are breaking
- ☐ B. From where waves begin to break to the shore
- ☐ C. Extending from a depth of two feet to a depth of ten feet
- ☐ D. From where waves begin to break and backrush ends

2. During surf passages a diver's buoyancy compensator should be:

- ☐ A. Deflated
- ☐ B. Partially inflated
- ☐ C. Half inflated
- ☐ D. Removed

3. Immediately after a wave breaks, a diver's buoyancy will be _____ it was before the wave broke.

- ☐ A. Greater than
- ☐ B. Less than
- ☐ C. The same as

4. During surf passages a diver's regulator should be:

- ☐ A. In the mouth
- ☐ B. Held in the hand
- ☐ C. Lying over the right shoulder
- ☐ D. None of the above

5. A diver should hold his/her mask firmly on the face:

- ☐ A. With fingers spread for visibility
- ☐ B. At all times while in the surf zone
- ☐ C. Until clear of the water when exiting
- ☐ D. All of the above

6. During surf entries a surface float should be:

- ☐ A. Beneath the diver
- ☐ B. Towed by the diver
- ☐ C. Pushed by the diver
- ☐ D. Held aloft by the diver

7. During surf exits a surface float should be:

- ☐ A. Beneath the diver
- ☐ B. Towed by the diver
- ☐ C. Pushed by the diver
- ☐ D. Held aloft by the diver

8. A diver should usually lie down and begin swimming when the water is:

- ☐ A. Knee deep
- ☐ B. Thigh deep
- ☐ C. Waist deep
- ☐ D. Chest deep

9. The optimum standing position for a diver entering the surf is:

- ☐ A. Facing the surf
- ☐ B. Facing away from the surf
- ☐ C. Sideways to the surf
- ☐ D. None of the above

10. During surf entries and exits a diver's feet should:

- ☐ A. Touch the bottom as little as possible
- ☐ B. Be shuffled along the bottom
- ☐ C. Be kept spread apart when standing
- ☐ D. All of the above

11. Which of the following passages is most difficult:

- ☐ A. An entry through rolling breakers
- ☐ B. An exit through rolling breakers
- ☐ C. An exit through plunging breakers
- ☐ D. An entry through plunging breakers

12. Crawling is recommended:

- ☐ A. For all surf exits
- ☐ B. For steep surf exits
- ☐ C. For those inexperienced in surf exits
- ☐ D. Whenever standing exits are difficult

13. Which of the following statements is false:

- ☐ A. Surf exits can be more difficult than entries
- ☐ B. Divers should not stop in the surf zone
- ☐ C. Fins should be donned before all surf entries
- ☐ D. Spearguns should be held parallel to shore during surf exits

14. True or False: There are no special equipment considerations for diving in surf.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False

15. Which of the following statements is true:

- ☐ A. Duck under incoming waves when exiting from surf
- ☐ B. The time between waves should be measured prior to making a surf entry
- ☐ C. Incoming waves must be watched during entries, but not during exits
- ☐ D. All of the above statements are false

Scuba Quiz

Answers: Surf Passages

1. B. From where waves begin to break to the shore. This area is also sometimes referred to as the surf line. The zone can be very narrow on steep beaches or very wide on shallow, sloping beaches. It is important to be familiar with the term. When you are instructed not to stop in the surf zone, you need to know what that means.

2. A or B. Deflated or partially inflated. During entries you should swim beneath waves and during exits you must avoid riding the tops of breaking waves or you could go "over the falls." If you are properly weighted for diving (neutral), your BC should not need to be inflated for a surf passage.

3. B. Less than. When a wave breaks, it aerates the water. This makes the water less dense. Since buoyancy is related to the weight of the water displaced, buoyancy is decreased when the water being displaced weighs less. The duration of this reduction in buoyancy is only a few seconds, but it can be alarming to the uninformed.

4. A. In the mouth. There are good reasons for keeping the regulator in the mouth, not the least of which is to keep sand out of the regulator. There is a great deal of sand and silt in suspension in surf. It is also easier to breathe from the regulator (than snorkel) and you are less likely to choke. The surf zone is no place for a diver to have a choking fit.

5. D. All of the above. A mask lost in the surf is extremely difficult to locate. Develop the habit of holding your mask at all times while in the surf zone. Lines to prevent loss can be dangerous and their use is discouraged. Wear the strap lower than usual and your mask will tend to fall around your neck instead of flipping off your head.

6. B. Towed by the diver. A diver should pass beneath oncoming waves during entries, so the float must be towed. Be prepared for a strong tug after a wave passes over you and strikes the surface float. Don't tie the line to yourself and keep it fairly short. Be sure your divers down flag is well secured or the surf will strip it from its staff.

7. C. Pushed by the diver. When approaching shore in surf, hold the float by its tow line and push it ahead. When a wave catches the float, hold onto the line, but not the float. If necessary, you can release the float and allow it to surf to shore, but it will require some extra effort to retrieve. Caution: Do not ride your float to shore.

8. A. Knee deep. The less time spent upright in the surf zone, the better. Start swimming as soon as possible. If you are lying down you can't fall down. Pull yourself along with your hands whenever possible. Use very short kick strokes until deeper water is reached. Buoyancy will be needed for rocky areas. Surf passages over rocks require special training.

9. C. Sideways to the surf. In some areas and under certain conditions, it is appropriate to wade some distance in the surf zone. When this is the case, there is greater stability when you "put a shoulder" into a wave than when you present your entire back to it. Avoid facing oncoming waves while standing in the surf zone.

10. D. All of the above. If you must wade, shuffle your feet to avoid stepping on rays, urchins, etc. and to detect holes, rocks, etc. As waves approach, stop moving and position your feet fairly far apart for stability. Keep your knees bent. It is still generally better to swim through surf than to wade through it.

11. C. An exit through plunging breakers. This may vary with circumstances, but my experience has proven that the steepness of the beach, the strength of the backwash, the suddenness of the break and other factors make exits through plunging breakers the most difficult surf passage.

12. D. Whenever standing exits are difficult. If there is a chance you will fall or get knocked down, stay down. Crawling provides four-point stability and should be used on steep beaches when exiting, but that's not the only time it is appropriate. Remember to avoid allowing extra second stages to drag when crawling.

13. C. Fins should be donned before all surf entries. Techniques vary with the area. Wading without fins may be essential at some sites. At others it may be necessary to run and jump into the water after a wave breaks, slip on one fin and kick out before the next wave breaks. You must learn the techniques for each area and its condition.

14. B. False. Fins can be lost in rough surf. Divers in some areas wear special straps to secure them. Regulators and consoles need to be secured. Equipment needs extra attention owing to sand and grit. More durable boots are required than for other types of diving. Your weightbelt release must be positive, but such that a wave will not open it.

15. B. The time between waves should be measured prior to making a surf entry. If you will count the seconds between waves while preparing to dive and time the interval between sets you will be able to negotiate the surf zone with greater ease and safety. Plan to enter between sets. When a wave passes over you, count to yourself and you will know when to expect the next one.

Is there more to surf passages than you expected? It is really a specialty area all by itself. Training is definitely required. If you have never dived through surf, don't attempt it without training. If you have surf experience, be sure to get an orientation to any new condition. Finally, if the surf is large, don't dive. The dive will be poor and the hazards posed by large surf are great.

Bonus Information:

1. Avoid leaving gear lying near the water's edge in surf.
2. Avoid equipment adjustments in the surf. Exit the water to make any needed adjustments, then re-enter.
3. Avoid being parallel to incoming waves when swimming.
4. You and your buddy can hold onto one another for stability in some surf conditions, but like all techniques, this isn't always appropriate.

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Diving Medicine

BY ALFRED A. BOVE, M.D., PH.D.



This hyperbaric chamber is used for operator training. While hyperbaric treatment is available to divers, prevention of DCS by proper use of the dive tables is the best policy.

This year the annual scientific meeting on diving medicine was held in Japan. Every three years this international meeting is held to bring scientists and physicians involved in diving medicine together to present new information on diving and the hyperbaric environment. This year's meeting was especially enjoyable because of the wonderful hospitality of the host, the Japanese Society for Hyperbaric Medicine. This was in conjunction with sponsorship by the Undersea Medical Society, the U.S. Office of Naval Research, the U.S. Air Force, the Navy Research and Development Command, and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The meeting was highlighted by two prominent speakers. The invited speaker for the opening session was retired admiral Motohiko Matsuda, a medical officer of the Japanese Marine Self Defense Force (equivalent to our Navy). He reviewed the history of diving medicine in Japan and pointed out several milestones in the history of Japanese diving.

The most notable diving industry in Japan is the group called the Ama. For the most part these are women free divers. The first organized studies of breath hold diving were done by Japanese physiologists who described the activities of these divers, their breathing and thermal protection techniques. Their work was fol-

lowed by several cooperative research studies that involved scientists from the United States and other countries. Admiral Matsuda continued his review by bringing us up-to-date on the commercial deep diving industry in Japan and the recent activities of the Japan Submarine Medical Research Laboratories. At the Japanese naval base at Yokosuka, these have recently been equipped with hyperbaric chambers with depth capabilities of more than 1,000 feet. They are used for research on deep diving and saturation exposures. Dr. Matsuda finished with a discussion of a joint Japanese-American marine technology program. The opportunity to hear about diving and diving research in the Far East opened new avenues for understanding and cooperation of diving activities around the world.

Our other guest speaker was Dr. Hermann Rahn, a world famous physiologist from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. Rahn has been involved in research in environmental physiology and respiration for many years. He provided us with a review of the effects on respiration of environments as diverse as the deepsea and the top of Mount Everest. His presentation pointed out many of the respiratory similarities that divers, aviators, astronauts and mountain climbers have and the need for adapting the body to environments of widely varying pres-

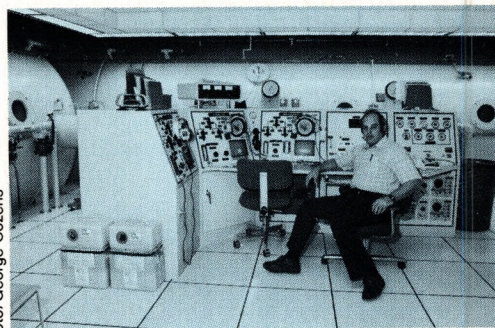
ures. The research presented pointed out problems with decompression sickness in these three environments.

DECOMPRESSION WORKSHOP

Preceding the meeting by a few days was a workshop on decompression sickness. This was held in Tokyo and involved participants from a variety of countries. Of note was the review of statistics for diving in the U.S. Navy, where the incidence of decompression sickness is well below 0.1 percent, in spite of some tables that have a very high incidence of decompression sickness. The 150 foot for 60 minute air table, for example, has a very high incidence of decompression sickness, and divers making this type of dive usually decompress on a longer table to avoid problems. There is also some data suggesting that divers who use hot water suits, mostly commercial and military divers, have an increased risk of decompression sickness.

There was a review of surface decompression procedures. This technique involves a rapid ascent to the surface from an intermediate decompression stop, rapid recompression in a chamber to the depth of the last stop, and completion of decompression in a chamber. The value of this procedure is in cases where the diver is at risk of injury from heavy seas, cold or other environmental conditions. The completion of decompression in a warm chamber with an outside support

photo/Bonnie J. Cardone



photo/George Cozens

This chamber is used for treatment.

crew, and sometimes an inside tender, is more reasonable than hanging alone in the seas for several hours. There are problems with surface decompression that were discussed in light of comments in the British press about its dangers. The key to safe surface decompression is the short (less than five minutes) surface interval that is allowed before recompression in the chamber. This five minutes includes the total time between leaving the water stop and reaching depth in the chamber. Obviously, the excursion must be done in a hurry, because it often involves a commercial diver in a full hard-hat rig. My diving medicine training in the U.S. Navy included a surface decompression dive. I may have gotten several

(Continued on Page 70)



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A woman with brown hair is smiling and posing in a purple and white wetsuit. She is wearing a diving mask on her head and has a scuba regulator in her mouth. She is holding a pair of white fins in her right hand. The background is a solid dark blue.

OCEANIC

OCEAN PRO WETSUIT

BY JIM WALKER

My first wetsuit was a daring fashion innovation for the time: The jacket had blue sleeves. The rest of it held to tradition in basic black. But, despite the individuality provided by the sleeves, I wanted to label the suit as unmistakably mine. Not wishing to paint my name all over it, I glued little orange neoprene sharks on it at strategic locations. And, it worked. I'm proud to say no one ever mistook that suit for theirs.

But, you say little orange sharks aren't exactly what you had in mind for your next wetsuit? You say you want a wetsuit with a little color, a little flash? You also want a wide choice of patterns and sizes? And, you're not sure whether you need it in 7mm, 5mm or 3mm neoprene? Well, to the rescue comes Oceanic—specifically, the Ocean Pro Wetsuit.

As you might have guessed, the Ocean Pro is actually a line of wetsuits, but they all have one thing in common: style. Available in flashy stock designs with first names such as Splash, Deep Vee and Deep Wedge, the Ocean Pro can also be ordered in custom sizes, patterns and colors. So, the look is up to you. But looks are only part of a wetsuit.

Stock Ocean Pros are available in men's and women's sizes labeled 1-6, with 1 being extra small and 6 extra large. And, men's sizes 3-6 in 7mm or 5mm neoprene are available in slim, regular and solid cuts. An example would be: A size 4 regular is equivalent to a medium large. A 4 slim has the body length of a medium large but the girth of a medium. A 4 solid has the same body length but the girth of a large.

Ocean Pros are made of stretchy Action-Reflex small cell neoprene, laminated to ultraviolet light resistant polyester outside and warm silver

photo/David B. Brooks

plush inside. All seams are double glued and blind stitched. All major seams are bar tacked and seam seals reinforce stress areas inside. The suit's edges are finished with Lycra tape.

The standard men's Ocean Pro has a farmer john that closes at the shoulders with Velcro. There are Action-Flex (patented in New Zealand) kneepads and a spine pad. The inside of the collar and wrists of the jacket, as well as the chest area of the johns, is skin neoprene to pro-



photo/Bonnie J. Cardone

Sharon Eatenton models the standard women's Ocean Pro wetsuit and Peter Jensen the standard men's model. Ocean Pros are available in many sizes and cuts.

vide a good seal against water. A matching cold water hood or a hooded jacket are optional. This suit comes with a navy blue polyester body and silver yolk (chest area), arm stripes and wrists. The thread trim is red.

The standard women's Ocean Pro has farmer janes with a zipper down the front, spine pad and Action-Flex kneepads. The jacket has a French cut and skin inside wrists and collar. The women's suit also has a hooded jacket and cold water hood available as options. This suit comes with a navy polyester torso and lavender yolk and wrists.

The standard Ocean Pro in 7mm neoprene is \$420 in men's sizes and \$410 in women's. The lavender Deep Wedge suit (3mm) shown on the first page is \$338.

For a closer look at the Ocean Pro, including its newest design, Splash, see your Oceanic dealer. For dealer information contact Oceanic U.S.A., 14275 Catalina Street, San Leandro, CA 94577. x



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Photography by Rick Frehsee.



SDMS U/W Video Course

Creating Action Sequences

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM AND CATHY CHURCH

Your first video movie was fun to view at first, but it was probably boring the second time—especially if you showed it to others who weren't reliving your dive. You probably chased after fish and made your viewers seasick with fast pans from side-to-side. Other divers may have stared at your camera and made faces and many of your scenes may have shown their fins as they swam away. What went wrong? Your first video movie lacked preplanned action sequences.

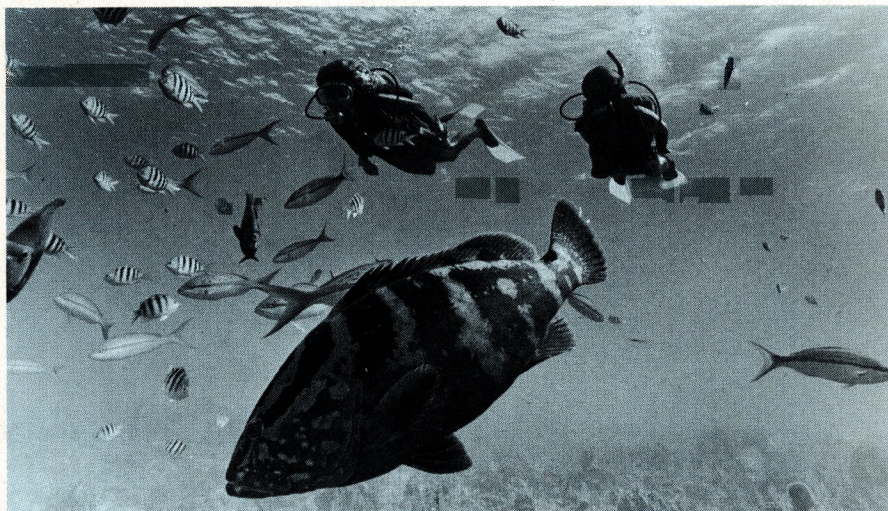
ACTION IS THE KEY

To show divers in action, you usually need their cooperation. And, to tell a story, the divers should be doing something other than hovering stiffly in the water and staring at the camera. Action involving divers and fish is usually easier to shoot at popular dive sites where hundreds of tourists have been handfeeding the fish. For our action example, we worked with a large grouper at the Aquarium off Grand Cayman. The grouper knew we were a potential food source and would follow us (and our can of cheese spread) anywhere.

CREATING THE SEQUENCE

The basic building blocks of almost any action sequence are the LS (long distance shot), MS (medium distance shot) and CU (close-up shot). This pattern is the way your eye and brain work together. You begin with an overall view, identify single subjects and then concentrate on a specific subject area or action. LS may be used to end the action sequence. Thus, this basic sequence—LS, MS, CU and LS—can be used again and again with a wide variety of subjects. While you can sometimes change from a LS to MS or MS to CU by simply moving the camera in closer, turning the camera off between each shot helps you control wobbly camera movements. Also, changes in camera angles between shots help cover any jumps in the action because they imply that something new is happening and add variety to the action.

Let's see how we can create an action sequence with the grouper and two divers. (Note: The simulated video images were taken with Nikon's cameras and 15 and 20mm lenses.)



The LS establishes the overall scene—two divers approaching a friendly grouper.

THE LONG SHOT

We used an LS to establish the overall scene. Rather than just starting with the grouper alone, we wanted to give the viewer an idea of the U/W terrain and visibility and introduce our diver models, Cathy and Ro (Robert Wratschko of Sunset Divers) to the scene and to the grouper in a natural manner.

We didn't start shooting immediately. First, Jim and his cast of characters made

a dry run to make sure the establishing LS would flow smoothly. The grouper would stay around as long as we had food, so we didn't rush the shoot. Jim got low and began shooting with an upward camera angle. The grouper was prominent in the foreground and Cathy and Ro entered the scene by swimming down to the grouper from the distant background, settling to bottom. Now, it was time to move in for the MS.

The MS identifies the action—the divers show the grouper a fish identification book.



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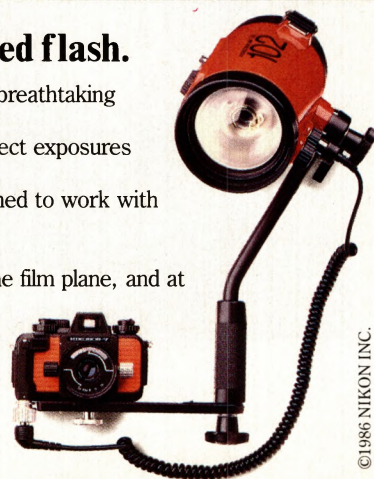
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VIDEO CLASS

THE MEDIUM SHOT

The MS bridges the gap between the LS that established the scene and the CU that is usually the heart of the action. In our example, we wanted to introduce the interaction between the grouper and the divers. The grouper was making slow passes around and between Cathy and Ro. Cathy had a waterproof fish identification book. Her role was to lure the grouper in close so it would appear he was looking at his own picture in the book. She hid the can of cheese spread behind the book and gave the grouper

just enough cheese to keep him interested. Jim moved in closer, held the camera steady and shot this action. When the grouper swam out of the frame, Jim turned the camera off—about 15 seconds of the same view was enough.

Suddenly, the yellowtail snappers realized there was food to be had. They darted in, filled the scene and made pests of themselves. But Kathie Mullins saved the day by diverting most of these little pirates away with another can of cheese. Thus, we learned another important lesson about shooting an U/W video story: You may need an additional diver just to lure non-starring fish away!

THE CLOSE-UP

Once Cathy lured the grouper in to the

SHOOTING A VIDEO STORY

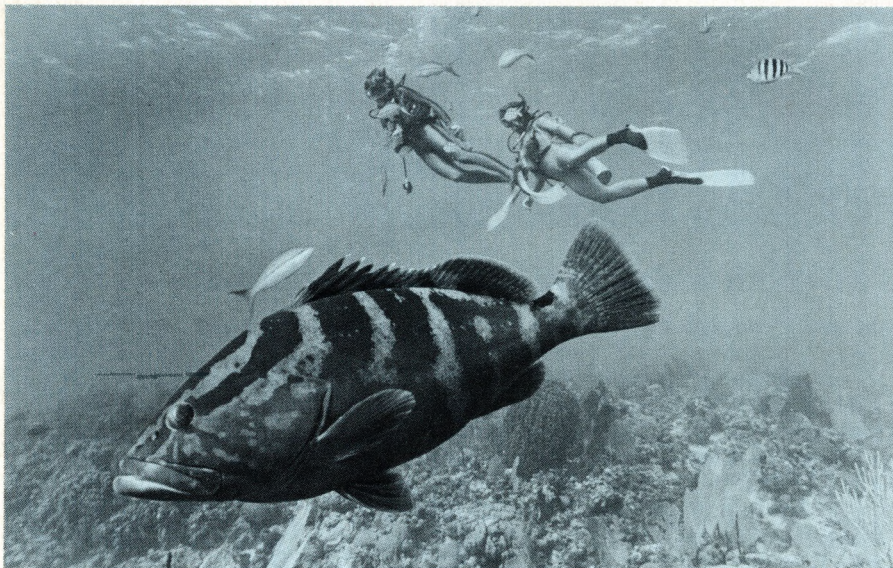
Because a complete video story will contain several action sequences joined end-to-end, you must plan ahead so the sequences will be in logical order. And, to keep the viewer from becoming confused, each sequence should be resolved before you proceed to the next.

Other techniques—storyboarding, cut-in and cut-away shots, and overlapped action—for shooting a video story—will be presented in future issues.



The CU highlights the action—the grouper looks at a photo of his species in the book.

The ending LS resolves the action—the divers swim away to their next U/W adventure.



fish book, Jim moved in for a close-up of the grouper looking at it. He didn't start shooting immediately; rather, he studied the grouper's movements for several minutes before shooting a short scene of the grouper apparently looking at his own picture. This was the action both the LS and MS had built up to, but we didn't want it to be too long. After three 10 second scenes—each from a slightly different camera angle—Jim pulled back for a short MS shot and turned the camera off.

RESOLVING THE ACTION

We added an ending LS to form a LS, MS, CU and LS pattern. The ending LS reestablished the overall scene, resolved the action and prepared the viewer for another U/W adventure.

Starting with a view of the grouper, Cathy and Ro—but with a slightly different camera angle than the previous MS—Cathy and Ro swam away from the grouper at an angle. Jim didn't shut the camera off until they swam completely out of the frame. To the viewer, their visit to the grouper had flowed smoothly and the action had come to a pleasant conclusion. Jim could now start again—with a new LS establishing shot—to show a different U/W action.

CONCLUSION

Once you pass the point and shoot stage of U/W video, in which you turned the camera on and swam around shooting a bunch of unrelated scenes, you will begin shooting action sequences that tell a story. This will, however, require some preplanning. If you were shooting color slides with a still camera, you could easily throw out the bad slides and rearrange the order of those you kept for a show. But with video—unless you have two recorders and editing equipment—you must shoot scenes in logical order.

Start with simple, predictable situations as you learn to shoot action sequences. If your action involves divers, discuss your goals ahead of time and (if possible) do a dry run before actually shooting. Start with the LS, MS, CU and LS pattern. You can vary and add to this pattern later after you have more experience. >

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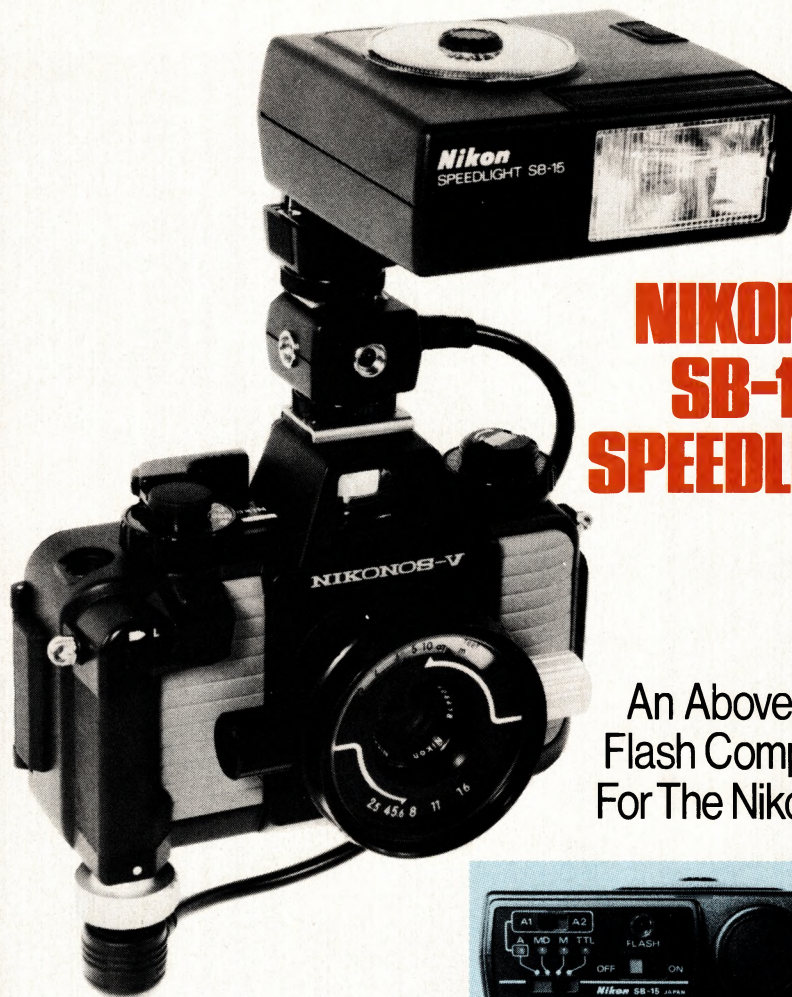
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For The Nikonos V

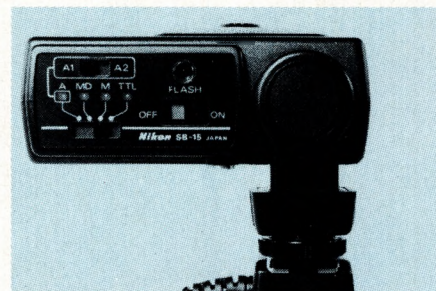
TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY

If you have ever been frustrated in attempting to use the Nikonos V flash system above water, you will really appreciate the value of the SB-15 Speedlight. Here is a compact, lightweight above water flash that can be quickly fitted to a Nikonos V. It is easy to use and will produce perfectly exposed pictures. Now you can take your Nikonos V to weddings, birthdays, parties and holiday events and not be bothered by bulky, awkward flash accessories.

DESIGN

The SB-15 Speedlight is so compact it can be held in the palm of your hand. Its outside dimensions are roughly four inches high (excluding shoe mount), three and one-half inches wide and one and one-half inches thick. It fits easily into a small camera bag, shoulder bag or coat pocket. The strobe is extremely lightweight, tipping the scales at a little less than 12 ounces with batteries included. It runs on four AA batteries, obtainable almost anywhere.

The SB-15 is strictly a topside flash and should not be submerged for any reason. It is connected to the Nikonos V by a special V-type TTL sync cord adapter. This fits into the shoe mount on top of the Nikonos V and the SB-15 is stacked



The SB-15 control panel (with indicator lights) is on the back of the flash.

on top of it. This strobe can be used in either manual or TTL automatic.

The SB-15 is an extremely versatile unit with many advanced features. It can be set in one of three positions—horizontal to the left, straight up vertical or horizontal to the right. The flash head itself can be tipped down (or up) on 30, 45 or 90 degree angles. This is very handy for close-up shooting or bouncing flash off the ceiling.

All flash controls for the SB-15 are on a panel at the back of the strobe. A quick glance will provide an instant status report of both the readiness and the power settings for the next shot. The flash can be fired via either the hot shoe mount or a PC connector cord.

PERFORMANCE

The basic SB-15 strobe provides sufficient flash coverage for the Nikonos V's standard 35mm lens. It puts out a rectangular pattern measuring 60 degrees horizontally and 45 degrees vertically. Nikon also furnishes a snap-in beam spreader for expanding the flash coverage for the



It's the world's most prestigious underwater photography contest held at Grand Cayman May 2-9, 1987, Bonaire May 30-June 6, 1987 and Cozumel July 11-18, 1987.

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SB-15

Nikonos V's 28mm land lens. Known as the SW-6 Wide Angle Adapter, this expands coverage to 70 degrees horizontally and 53 degrees vertically.

The SB-15 will operate on either AA alkalines or rechargeable nickel cadmium cells. When set on full manual power and using alkaline batteries, the strobe will deliver 160 flashes at a recycle time of less than eight seconds. Recycle time is faster with rechargeables, but the number of flashes is reduced.

The bright red ready light is mounted directly over the on/off switch. You can test fire the strobe simply by pushing the ready light.

The strobe offers four different flash modes, with a selector slide switch and indicator lights for each setting. TTL automatic is clearly marked by a green light and the letters TTL. Manual is marked with the letter M and a red light.

Next to manual is the motor drive mode, marked by the letters MD and a



The SB-15 flash head can be rotated down or up at 30, 45 or 90 degree angles.

red light. This was designed for other Nikon cameras such as the FA, FE2 and FG. However, MD can be handy for flash fill shots as it produces 1/13th the power of manual.

The final setting is standard automatic, indicated by the letter A and a red light. It is for use on non-TTL cameras and offers two power settings—A1 and A2.

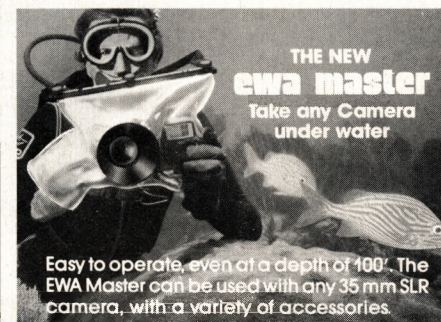
An exposure calculator dial is mounted on top of the strobe. It allows you to dial in the film ISO speed, power setting and flash mode. With this calculator, you can determine the approximate f/stop setting for the lens.

I found the SB-15 extremely handy aboard a dive boat. It provided a perfect way to capture those candid pictures between dives, at meals and in the evening. It won't be long before you find yourself carrying this strobe on every dive trip.

The SB-15 Speedlight carries a suggested retail price of \$135. The V-type sync cord is \$75 more. For more information see your local Nikonos dealer or contact Nikon Inc., 623 Stewart Avenue, New York, NY 11530; telephone (516) 222-0200.

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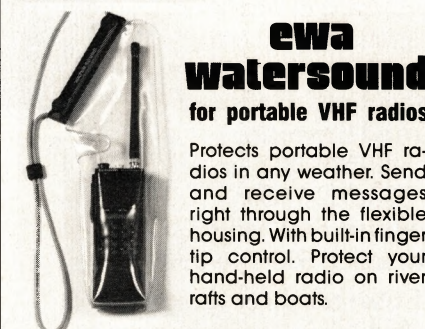


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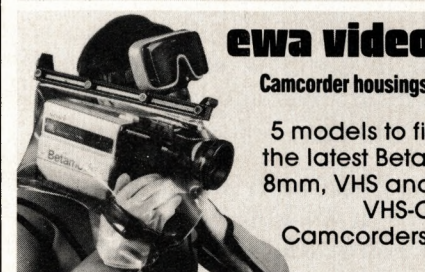
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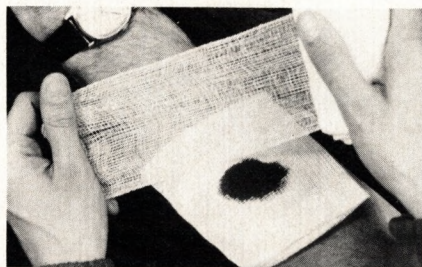
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BEUCHAT CONTACT



A Full Foot
Fin That Is Both
Comfortable And
Powerful

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

A few years ago, before I became an AU/W photographer, I was asked to model for one. We very carefully planned my outfit. Because he considered my black, adjustable heel, vented neoprene fins ugly, the photographer produced a pair of blue, full foot fins and insisted I wear them. The planned pictures would have turned out great, I'm sure, if there hadn't been a current. Because there was one, and because my fins were so flimsy, I was swept away before the photo session could begin!

If I had had a pair of Beuchat Contact full foot vented fins I would have been able to deal with the current easily and looked good, too. These fins are not only photogenic but practical: Their stiff, vented blades produce a powerful kick. Although we show the Contacts here with a black foot pocket and clear blade, the fins are also available with a pink or blue foot pocket and clear blade or with a black foot pocket and graphite blade.

A little more than a year ago, we introduced Beuchat's vented adjustable heel fins—also called Contacts—on these pages. At that time we pointed out that, although the Beuchat name is new to American divers, the company has been making top of the line diving equipment

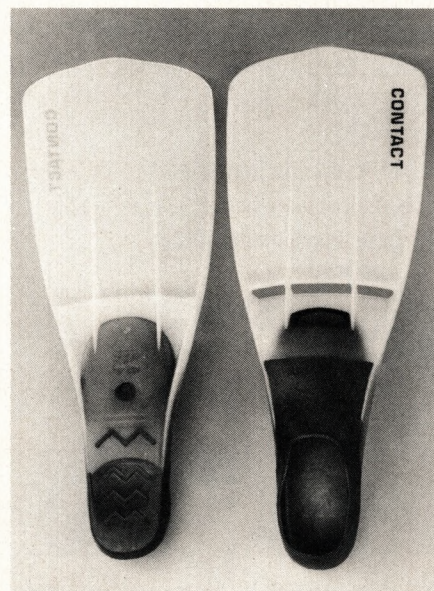
in France for more than 40 years. Its founder, Georges Beuchat, invented the vented fin some 20 years ago.

The new full foot pocket Contacts, like their adjustable counterparts, are constructed of a thermoplastic elastomer. This makes them lightweight: According to Beuchat's catalogue they are "30 percent lighter than comparable rubber fins." A pair of medium sized Contacts weighs less than three pounds. The fins are only 23¼ inches long and 8½ inches wide. Because they're compact and lightweight, traveling divers will love them.

One of the other benefits of the plastic material used in these fins is its flexibility. This makes the foot pocket comfortable.

As you might expect, plastic fins are easy to care for. There are just a few words of caution. The plastic forms that come with the fins should be inserted in the foot pockets when the fins are stored, to prevent sagging or distortion. Also, don't leave these fins in the sun—or anywhere they may be exposed to excessive heat—because the foot pocket may become deformed. This won't affect performance, only aesthetics.

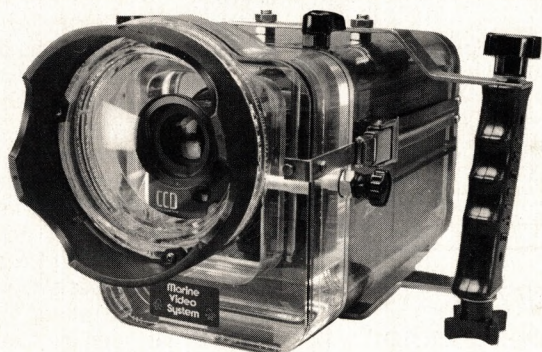
Contact full foot fins come in five sizes: 4-6, 6-7, 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12. With a clear blade, they are \$33 a pair; with a



A full foot fin doesn't have to be flimsy. The Contacts' vents provide plenty of power. The clear blades are photogenic.

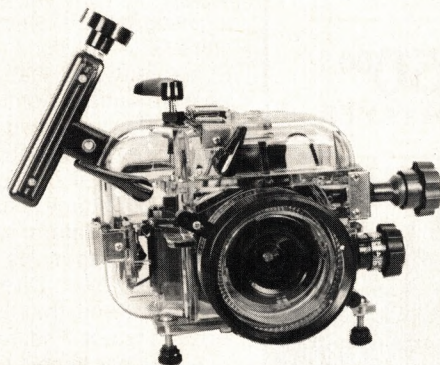
graphite blade they sell for \$36. For more information contact: Beuchat, 811 NW First Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311; (305) 523-7242. 

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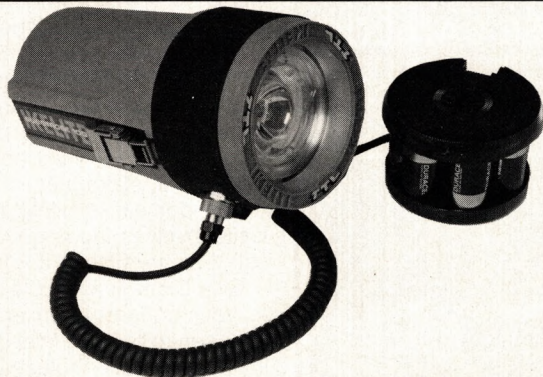
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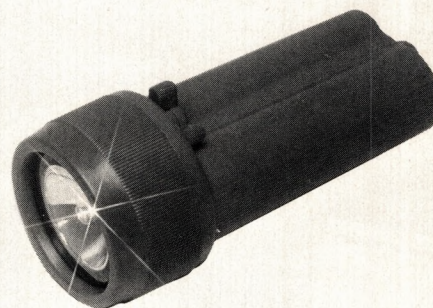
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WRECK FACTS

(Continued from Page 12)

such as Mel Fisher and they covet the power to legislate them off of wrecks, then claim them for the states under federal law.

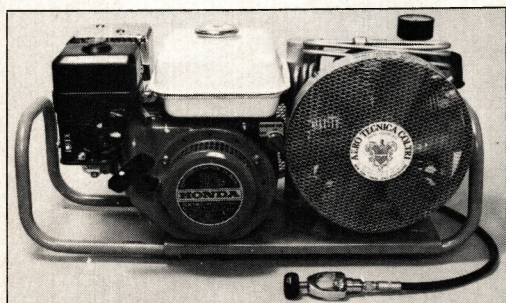
"States rights!" they scream. "Pass this federal law that will simply hand over jurisdiction of historic shipwrecks to individual states. This is for the good of the public. Who do they think they are kidding? This is a move in an on-going chess game—and a poor move at that—to do away with Admiralty Law. Admiralty Law protects the salvor and sport diver while calling for sound archaeological techniques and preservation of artifacts. Admiralty Law, in effect for more than 200 years, has been fair to divers, but not to power-crazed bureaucrats.

Did you know that in the 1970s, one of Mel Fisher's original treasure troves was seized by Florida State officials who kept it for seven years? Fisher fought more than 100 court cases within the state, including appeals and motions, but he never overcame the dark shadow cast by the smoking guns of officials within the Sunshine State. It wasn't until he reached the Supreme Court that he won back his treasure—under Admiralty Law!

If divers stop diving wrecks because of excessive red tape and threats of arrest—owing to this ill-conceived bill—it will affect clubs, stores, charter boats, equipment manufacturers, publications and certification agencies. Thanks go to the California Wreck Divers, one of the few organizations that has publicly challenged the act. And, thanks to divers and clubs in New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, Florida and other states who have written in to protest the bills.

By this writing, the bureaucrats will probably have dropped another bill in the hopper (and I don't mean the toilet, although that's where it belongs) and are sitting back waiting for a committee to review it. This is a continued waste of time and taxpayers' money. Something must be done. Ten bills in almost eight years is ridiculous! Although the bill didn't go through last year, the outlook remains grim and divers must act now. There is far more at stake than wreck diving. The public domain is being threatened. The issue involves the rights of Americans to use their own lands and waters.

Sink the Ship of Fools again by writing to your congressmen and especially to your senators. (The final decision will rest in the Senate.) Protest the entire inept Abandoned Shipwreck Act, including all of its additions, deletions, revisions and meaningless rhetoric. Support Admiralty Law and preserve your right to discover and claim a shipwreck without state harassment backed by federal law. Hit them where it hurts—send copies of your let-



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ters to local newspapers. Some proponents have backed out over the years when the issues hit the presses and constituents called to complain. Join the Atlantic Alliance: P.O. Box 27272, Central Station, Washington, DC 20038. The Alliance will keep you informed of what's happening on the Hill and it will let you know the course of this foolish ship that we expect will be abandoned someday.

Safe diving to all. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope when writing to: Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. 🐠

SOUTH FLORIDA U/W PHOTO COMPETITION

The South Florida Underwater Photography Society is seeking international entries for its fourth Annual World Underwater Photography Competition. The competition will be held in conjunction with Oceans Miami Month and the Ocean Expo '87 Film Festival April 4-5 at Planet Ocean in Miami, Florida. Finalists will be displayed and shown at Planet Ocean.

The judging will be done in advance by Stephen Frink, Robert Holland, Steve Lucas and Burton McNeely. More than \$5,000 in prizes, along with plaques and ribbons, will be awarded for first, second and third place in each of five categories, plus best of show. Categories will be: macro, close-up, close focus-wide angle, wide angle and fresh water.

Entries must be received by March 10. For an official entry form and rules please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (or international postal coupon for foreign requests) to: South Florida Underwater Photography Society, 1141 NE 142nd Street, North Miami, Florida 33161; phone (305) 891-6095. 🐠

NAUI APPOINTMENTS

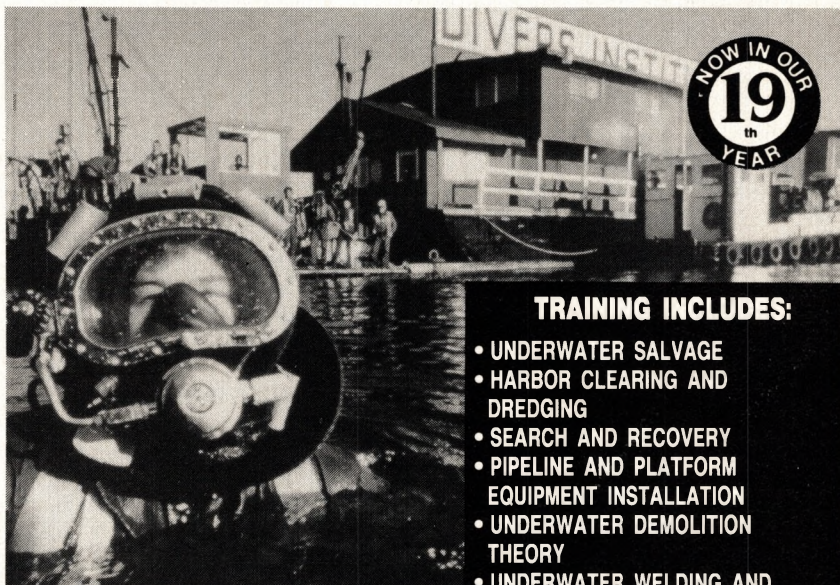
Three appointments have been made recently to positions with the National Association of Underwater Instructors: J. Norman Stevens was named projects manager, John R. Kessler western regional representative and Rick Moore, branch manager of the southwest region.

Stevens, a NAUI instructor for three years, oversees product inventory and the updating of products and materials. He also develops new products and services. Most recently, Stevens taught and assisted with scuba diving courses at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Kessler serves as liaison between professional diving facilities and NAUI Headquarters in the area from Alaska to Baja, Mexico. He assists stores with marketing, promotions and training. He brings to NAUI expertise in management and operations, promotions and sales, resort and dive travel and instructor training.

Moore supervises NAUI courses and activities in eight states from Colorado to Mississippi. He has extensive dive store experience and has instructed at many leadership courses. 🐠

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Technifacts

BY E.R. CROSS



During the past four decades there has been a tremendous surge in the search for and development of offshore oil. Throughout the world thousands of drill rigs and even more development platforms have been placed in service in the marine environment; an environment that is hostile to mankind, equipment and material. Immediately after the offshore industry began its search for underwater oil and gas concern developed for the safety of platforms, rigs and personnel, as well as for potential damage to the environment. The industry began to develop methods of inspection and maintenance of the potentially threatened installations.

One of the fastest growing types of underwater work for well trained, qualified divers is monitoring the condition of the

offshore structures and doing the maintenance indicated as a result of those inspections. This field of work is generally known as nondestructive testing (NDT); also known, in different countries, as non-destructive evaluation or nondestructive inspection. By whatever name, the primary inspector is the diver/technician.

NDT DEFINED

By definition, nondestructive testing includes any method that does not involve damaging or destroying the test sample (the basic structure). It includes cleaning, X-rays, ultrasonics, radiography, magnetic particle, stereoscopy and color photography, underwater TV, corrosion potential measurements, Fe-depth (the depth of reinforcing iron in a concrete

structure) and visual inspections.

NDT REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for nondestructive testing and other inspections have varied in both companies and in countries in which they work. However, at present there seems to be some standardization developing within companies, but not to any great extent within countries. For example, out of eight agencies such as the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the American Petroleum Institute (API), Lloyds, etc., and 15 offshore oil companies (Shell, British Petroleum, et al.) all except two oil companies require annual inspections of their installations; only five companies and five agencies require special inspections; and no companies

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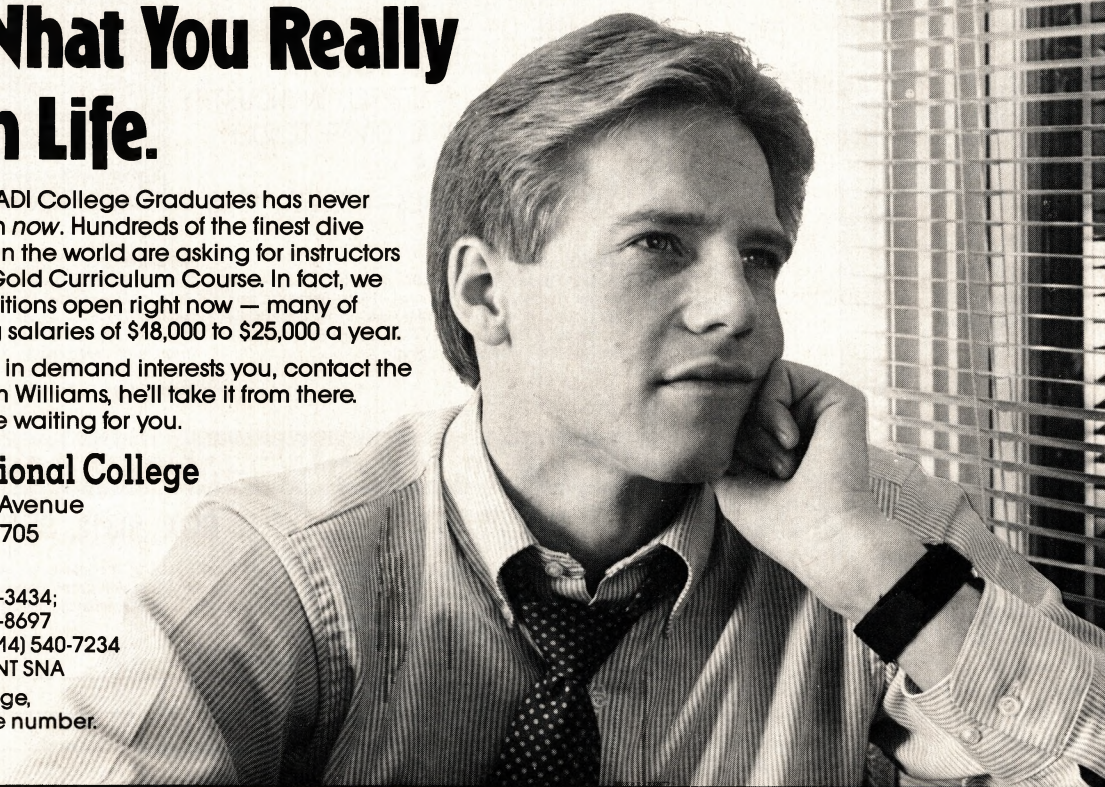
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and seven agencies require inspections after special circumstances.

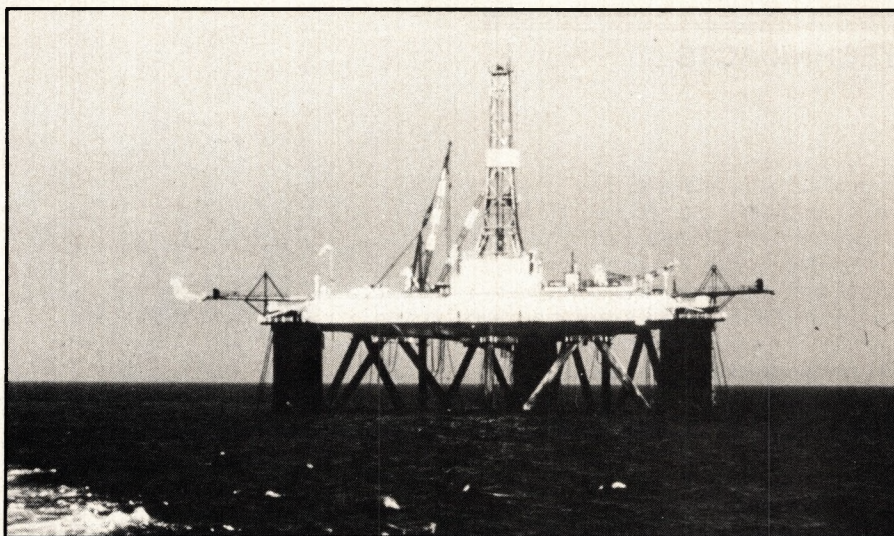
The North Sea oil patches have been allocated to various governments, i.e., the British sector, the German sector, etc. Each country can now establish its own inspection and NDT test requirements.

NDT CLASSIFYING AGENCIES

In the British sector there are five classifying societies authorized to set standards for U/W inspection of structures; in Norway, one. Other countries (Denmark, West Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden) were developing inspection program directives and probably have them in force at this time. With respect to this, some certifying agencies have recognized the programs of specific diving schools as meeting their standards for training personnel to make the required inspections. Graduates of approved schools can apply for examination for inspection certificates in those countries.

TYPES OF NDT

Throughout the offshore oil industry, in all parts of the world, there is considerable U/W inspection and nondestructive testing in progress at all times. For purposes of this Technifacts both inspection and cleaning are considered important aspects of nondestructive testing. An uninspected or inadequately inspected



A semi-submersible oil platform—one of the "worlds" of the NDT inspection diver.

installation is a disaster about to happen.

There are four capabilities that may be used to inspect underwater structures and place instruments at the worksite: divers, manned submersibles, atmospheric diving suits (ADS), and remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). Of the four capabilities the diver, if properly equipped and trained to work at the depth of the installation, is believed to be the best suited to conduct most NDT and inspection operations. There are two important reasons for this. First, almost all underwater

NDT equipment was designed to be used by human hands in a topside environment; not by hydraulically controlled manipulators. Secondly, the unique contribution the diver makes to underwater NDT is manipulative dexterity and a very responsive sense of touch.

Seven types of nondestructive testing are currently in use on a regular basis. These include visual inspection, cleaning (for this report at least), magnetic particle, ultrasonics, radiography, magnetic detection and corrosion potential mea-

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TECHNIFACTS

surements and analysis. Two of these NDT capabilities are required by nearly all governments of North Sea oil patches for the rigs to obtain inspection/certification or to renew that certification. The two required NDT capabilities are magnetic particle inspection and corrosion potential measurements. All other inspection capabilities are required in one area or another or by one rig operator or another but requirements are not consistent.

VISUAL INSPECTIONS

Visual inspections represent a major part of all routine or general rig surveys. A diver, outfitted with a surface air supply and telephone communication to the surface, and possibly with closed circuit TV leading to a real time monitor on the surface, and underwater photographic equipment, is capable of making valuable inspections of rig condition. A properly equipped and trained diver can detect and report on broken or deformed members of the rig, major cracking or corrosion pitting, extent of marine fouling, debris accumulation on or at the base of the rig, the condition of corrosion prevention systems, and any scouring at the base of



This diver is making a photographic survey. Notes are made immediately after each photo is taken to document visual and photo information for the underwater site.

the structure. While performing a thorough visual inspection, some cleaning of major fouling will probably have to be done by the diver.

While a diver can perform many tasks by feel alone, there are some obvious limitations. One is water clarity. For maximum information to be obtained at least one meter of visibility is needed. Other factors that may influence accuracy are the physiological and psychological impact on the diver working at depth on a

strange rig with the physiological factor of depth being the greatest. At a depth of about 100 feet the diver could have some loss of judgement and at about 150 feet severe nitrogen narcosis. The huge size of the structure may also cause poor judgement when visibility permits seeing only a small fraction of it.

CLEANING

While cleaning is not actually an inspection per se, it is a critical part of any,

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including visual, inspection. It is particularly important in the use of every inspection instrument available today. This procedure is therefore included in this section so prospective inspection divers are aware of some of the skills required for this important work.

Offshore steel structures must be cleaned to bare metal. Several techniques and tools have been developed or adapted for divers. These include air or hydraulic powered grinders, wire brushes, different scrapers, needle guns (one certifying agency suggests these not be used, particularly on welds), and high pressure water jets. (A word of caution on these: Some pumps deliver water to the jets at a pressure of more than 14,000 psi. These are basically balanced nozzles but the cutting end of the jet can cause serious damage to a diver—instantly.) The actual extent of the cleaning will be dictated by company (rig owner) policy and the instrument being used.

MAGNETIC PARTICLE INSPECTION (MPI)

This is probably the most widely used NDT technique presently in use. Most Magnetic Particle Inspection instruments are adaptations of topside instruments. However, they do function well and can detect discontinuities at or near the surface of the metal in the structure.

There are at least four systems for MPI



A commercial diver with a closed circuit television camera provides real time observation for topside engineering studies.

testing. All are quite complex and the type used will depend on the contractor. Intensive training is required for successful MPI inspection.

Fe-DEPTH METER

This is a device for measuring the depth of reinforcing iron or other magnetic material in a concrete structure. The handheld instrument, designed by C.N.S. Instruments, London, is operated by divers, and used to measure the extent of erosion of a concrete structure, which would be indicated by a change in thickness of the concrete over the metal rebar.

ULTRASONIC TESTING

Like MPIs, ultrasonic inspection transmitters must have a clean surface. They can be used on any material that will transmit mechanical vibrations, such as steel, concrete or even wood. At present, two different techniques are used for UT: resonance techniques and pulse techniques. In underwater testing the pulse echo technique with the transducer in contact with the material being tested, is used. The SUIIS III unit was developed strictly for underwater use. While most units can measure thickness, the SUIIS III can also be used to detect flaws in the tested material.

Interpretation of the information obtained by UT instruments is critical and must be done by a highly skilled UT technician. Considerable training is required.

RADIOGRAPHY

Little radiography-on-film type inspection is done U/W. This is primarily because of high cost, difficulty and complexity of using this technique and safety problems in handling the radioactive isotopes. Difficulties in using and cost are partly owing to the necessity of installing the films to the structure to be inspected and to the long exposures needed when a subject is in or filled with water.

At present the primary use of radiography underwater is for weld inspection on

(Continued on Page 43)

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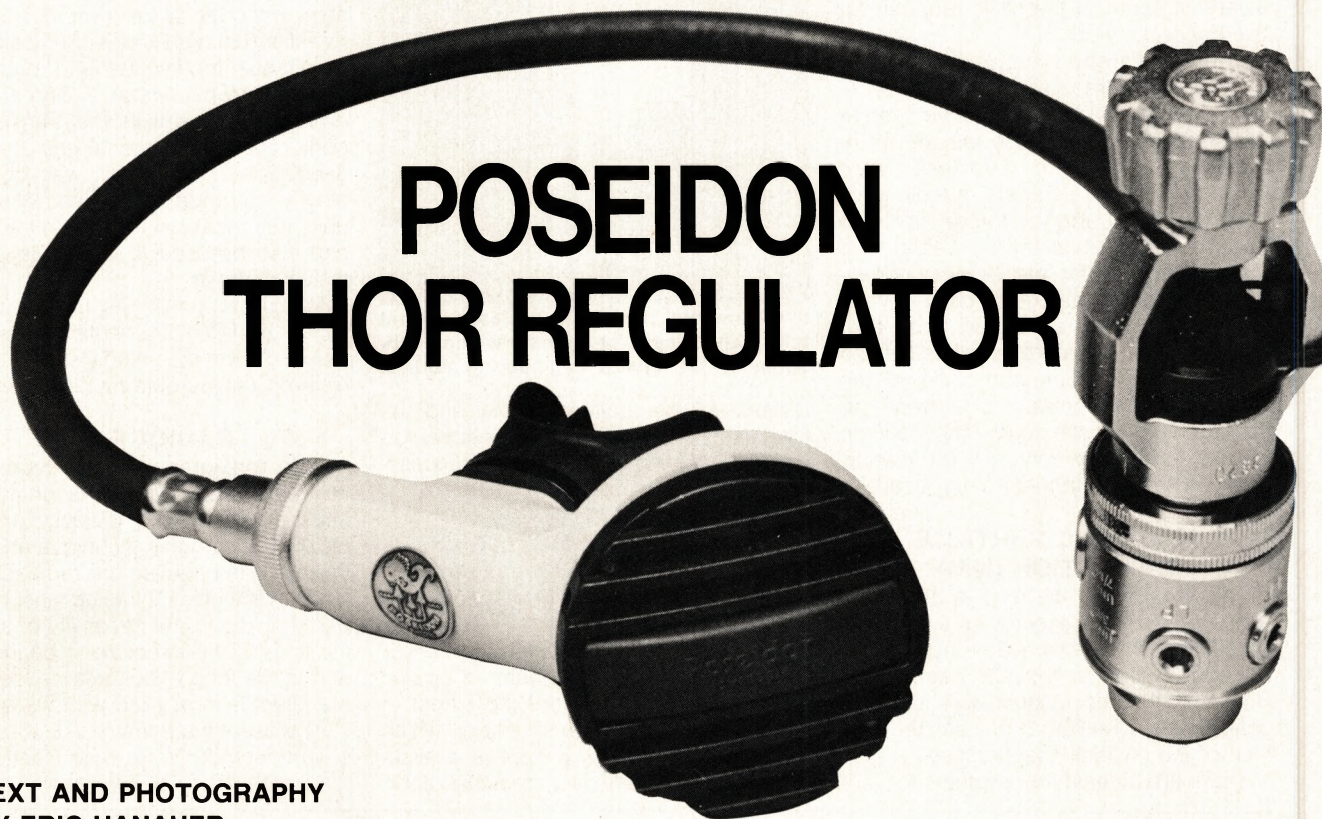
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THOR

POSEIDON THOR REGULATOR



**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ERIC HANAUER**

Specification sheets for regulators manufactured in this country have developed a certain familiar look over the past few years. But in Europe, designers often tread a different path toward their high performance goals. A case in point is Sweden's new Poseidon Thor. It's a sport car among regulators, with high air-flow at depth and at low tank pressures. Yet the first stage is an unbalanced diaphragm and the second stage is actuated by a tilt valve mechanism.

To understand and appreciate the Thor, we have to look beyond the bare specs and see what's underneath its attractive yellow, ABS plastic housing. The first stage has a pressure compensating device that increases intermediate pressure as tank pressure drops. And, the tilt valve is merely a pilot that acts as the only moving part in a servo-assisted second stage. The result is as different from the usual regulator as a Saab is different from a Chevy Camaro. Yet each is a top performer in its own way.

Although it's named for the Norse god of thunder, the Thor isn't made by trolls in Swedish forests. The name is used only in North America, to emphasize its Scandinavian heritage. In Europe it is known as the Oceanair. It's manufactured by Poseidon, the company responsible for the Unisuit and the Cyklon 300 regula-

tor. Both have won worldwide respect for their performances under ice, from the North Sea to the Antarctic.

The Thor is a mating of the venerable Cyklon first stage, introduced 15 years ago, and the Maximum second stage, vintage 1981. Both have been improved by the wedding. The old regulator had a reputation for being a bit fussy. But, according to Craig Jennings of Posdive, the American distributors, the Thor is now Poseidon's most reliable regulator.

One feature that continues is the unusual yoke system. In Europe, tank pressures of 4,500 psi are not uncommon. The first stage yoke system used in the U.S. (and throughout most of the world) is good for a maximum of about 3,200 psi. Above that pressure, the first stage must screw directly into the tank valve. Divers who have traveled to German-run centers, as in the Maldives or the Red Sea, are probably familiar with DIN (Deutsche Industrielle Norm) fittings. A tank adapter is necessary to attach American regulators to DIN valves.

All Poseidon regulators have a convertible first stage, which fits either system without an adapter. Its yoke mounts over the DIN fitting for general use, or can be removed for higher pressure tanks. It is rated at 200 Bar (3,000 psi) with a yoke, or 300 Bar (4,400 psi) with the DIN fitting.

The screw collar doubles as a first stage swivel device.

The first stage is an unbalanced diaphragm system that employs an unusual compensating action to assure adequate air supply at low tank pressures. The secret is an opposing spring design, where a small spring combines with tank pres-

THOR

First stage:

TypeUnbalanced diaphragm
Materials.....Chromed brass housing
HP seat high density thermoplastic
High pressure portsOne, 1/16"
Low pressure portsThree, 3/16"
FeaturesConvertible DIN or U.S. fitting

Low pressure compensating device
Intermediate pressure.....145-175 psi
Hose length.....27 inches

Second stage:

Type.....Servo assisted sleeve valve
MaterialsABS plastic housing
Chromed brass valve tube
Silicone sleeve valve
Silicone diaphragm/exhaust valve

Features.....Side mounted exhaust
Overpressure valve in hose swivel

WarrantyLimited lifetime, metal parts
Price\$260

sure to act as a closing force on the high pressure valve. A large spring over the diaphragm opposite provides opening force. As tank pressure decreases, the large spring begins to overpower the small one, keeping the valve open longer and allowing intermediate pressure to build up from 145 to 175 psi, increasing air supply to the diver at low tank pressures. Therefore, even though the valve is unbalanced, it works in the diver's favor. For 1986, the low pressure end was given a larger housing with a longer spring travel. That improves performance at depth, allowing it to meet U.S. Navy standards to 175 feet.

Only three low pressure ports are supplied on the first stage. For most divers that's no problem, but an adapter for a fourth one may be needed when drysuit season rolls around. That will be the only adapter necessary, because all Poseidon regulators now have American threads and fittings. The first stage can be fitted with an antifreeze cap. This is filled with alcohol (or even vodka) to prevent freeze-up when diving in extremely cold conditions. Poseidon pioneered the use of environmental caps in regulators.

There is no upside down to the lightweight second stage, so the hose can come over either shoulder. This also simplifies buddy breathing. The side mounted exhaust not only allows easy exhalation, but won't freeflow in current or when riding a DPV, because it is not exposed to head-on water pressure. Exhaust is accomplished through the edge of the diaphragm, a huge surface area that allows extremely low exhalation effort.

There is a switch on the back of the housing that should be set to the minus (-) position on the surface to desensitize the regulator and prevent freeflow. The switch moves a shoe that places a mechanical drag on the back of the diaphragm, increasing inhalation resistance. When you are ready to descend, move the switch to the plus (+) position. Leave the switch at plus when the regulator is stored, to prevent distorting the diaphragm. This would cause the Thor to breathe wet. Usually, 24 hours of storage in the plus position will return it to normal. If it doesn't, replace the diaphragm.

A rubber purge bar crosses the center of the second stage cover. It has a hair trigger. The slightest finger pressure will actuate a big blast that clears the second stage of water. As the diaphragm moves inward, it unseats the tilt lever of the servo assist valve. This allows air to escape from the valve tube, which collapses a silicone sleeve inside the low pressure valve housing. The sleeve normally presses against the 64 small holes in the

housing, preventing air from escaping. When the sleeve collapses, air escapes and is supplied to the diver. The only mechanical moving part in the entire system is the servo valve.

Most divers today equate tilt valves with obsolete designs of the 1960s. Yet pilot valve regulators use tilt valves for the servo assist because of their simplicity. However, one thing that is necessary with a tilt valve is an overpressure device. Without it, a first stage failure could rupture the hose. In the past, overpressure devices consisted of a blowout plug on the first stage. Poseidon integrated theirs into the swivel fitting on the second stage end of the hose. In the unlikely event of first stage failure, the valve will unseat and blow off excess air when intermediate pressure reaches 250 psi. The regulator itself will continue to function perfectly on ascent as long as air remains in the tank. You can test the overpressure valve by pulling the hose away from the second stage when the air is turned on. If it leaks air, it's set to work if needed.

Although the Thor's second stage is based on the Maximum (discontinued), a few improvements have been made. It breathes drier than the old one, because of new baffling that allows water to flow

water, otherwise an energetic freeflow will remind you of your oversight.

Breathing was dry and effortless in all the normal positions. Only when turning on my back did it become difficult and damp, but that is the Achilles' heel of most single hose regulators. Otherwise, there were no unusual leaks or freeflows, even when descending head down. When slowly sipping air, a slight restriction was felt before the air flowed. This is owing to the lag before the servo system does its work and is noticed as an increase in cracking effort.

When removed from the mouth with the mouthpiece up, the Thor freeflowed forcefully, but stopped when the mouthpiece was turned down. Clearing was practically effortless when done manually; the slightest puff did the job. A feather touch anywhere on the purge bar releases a strong blast of air for automatic clearing. Exhalation effort is among the easiest of any regulator I have tested. At first, it seemed strange to have the bubbles exhaust on one side, but that was easy to get used to.

Because of the safety valve in the second stage swivel, that fitting was a bit stiff. This caused a slight drag, especially when I moved my head up and down.



The Thor's first stage can be set up for DIN fittings by separating the yoke (right).

more easily toward the exhaust edge of the diaphragm. This year both the diaphragm and mouthpiece are silicone.

The Thor has unique features galore, but the big question remained: How well do they translate into performance? The only way to find out was to take it diving. This was done over a three day period, at depths of 130 feet. And, the answer is *vara bra*, (or very good, for our non-Swedish readers).

When you attach your Thor to the tank and turn on the air supply, you will be greeted with a one second blast of air. That's normal; the system is merely pressurizing itself. Don't forget to set the lever to the minus position before entering the

At depth and low tank pressures, the Thor delivered an impressive volume of air. Even with hard swimming and heavy breathing, there was plenty. I would have full confidence in the regulator under these conditions.

The Poseidon Thor is a new variation on a familiar theme from one of Europe's most respected diving equipment manufacturers. It comes with a limited lifetime warranty covering all metal parts. For a retail price of \$260, you can be the first on your block to apply Swedish engineering to your diving activities. Contact Poseidon, Inc., 322 Main St., Port Washington, NY 11050 for the name of your nearest Poseidon dealer. 



fornia's most successful inflatable boat dealerships. What he doesn't know about boats and motors probably isn't worth knowing. As he had done so many times in the past, he was generous in sharing his expertise.

For 1987, Mercury has introduced a new family of three cylinder outboard motors to replace its venerable in-line six. These are smaller, lighter, quieter and more economical than the ones they replace. Although they come in 70, 80 and 90 horsepower, they are essentially the same motor, with different carburetion and manifolds. They represent Mercury's answer to foreign competition—and a successful one—according to McIntosh. He added that this 90 is extremely powerful for its size, extremely quiet for its horsepower and is the first Merc with full integral oil injection. He also revealed that Novurania had used a 115 on its initial trials of the MX 570, but realized the 90 provided all the horsepower needed.

Outboard motor manufacturers have a jargon all their own, which can fall as strangely on divers' ears as our jargon must fall on theirs. McIntosh translated some of it for me. For example, the brochures talk a lot about "loop scavenging." This is a cylinder design that optimizes gas circulation, resulting in better fuel economy and performance. "Thunderbolt ignition" turned out to be a capacitive discharge ignition system, resulting in a hotter spark and less fouled

MERCURY 90 HP OUTBOARD

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ERIC HANAUER

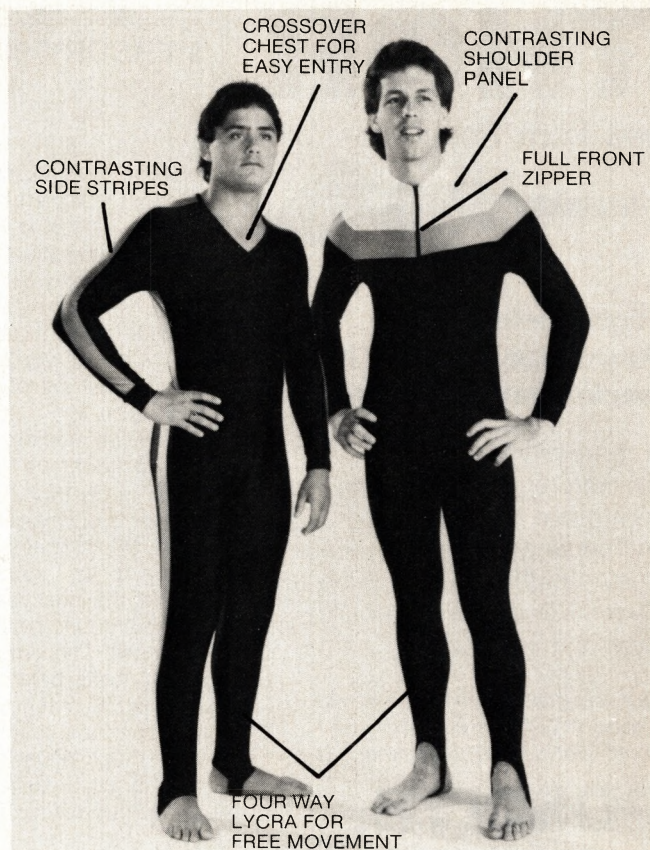
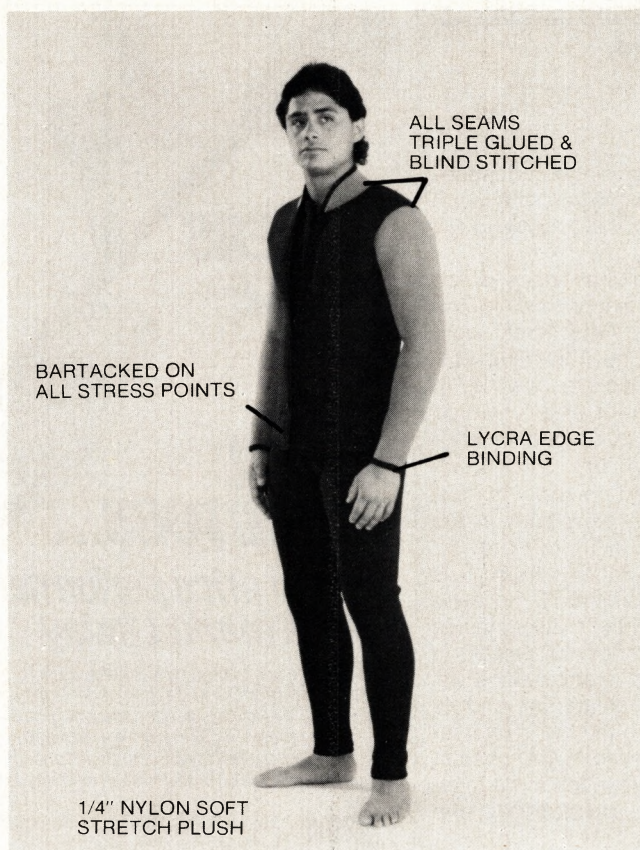
It seemed like a scene from *Star Trek*. The ocean was flat as a pond, a distant haze obscuring the horizon and blending sea and sky into the same neutral shade of gray. Our Novurania MX 570 seemed suspended in infinity, neither a creature of air nor water. It was decked out like the starship *Enterprise*, with every goodie Scott McIntosh could provide from his Port-a-Marine dealership. The fiberglass hulled inflatable had a double console with LCD radar and fathometer, full engine instrumentation including tachometer and speedometer, VHF radio and plush seats with dry boxes underneath. The radar arch overhead was a swept-back rollbar. Captain James T. Kirk would feel at home here.

Through the long run in Newport Harbor, the powerful Mercury 90 burbled smoothly behind our backs. When we finally reached the end of the jetty, I pushed the throttle forward. The misty tranquillity of the morning was broken with a muffled roar as the boat jumped right up on a plane and skimmed the flat surface. Instant warp drive! There was a tremendous sensation of speed and power under perfect control, as the speedometer passed the 40 mile per hour mark. Despite the wind in my face, I couldn't stop grinning. Bring on the Klingons!

The purpose of this trek was to test Mercury's new 90 horsepower outboard motor. Our guide was Scott McIntosh of Costa Mesa's Port-a-Marine, one of Cali-

plugs. It is used commonly today in automobiles, but was first developed by Mercury in the 1960s.

If you remember outboard motors as balky, cantankerous machines, you haven't examined the new generation. Take the oil injection system, for example. When manufacturers first added an auxiliary tank to feed oil into the fuel as needed, it solved the problem of inconsistent lubrication. Mercury has gone one step farther by mounting the oil tank underneath the engine cowling. This simple, self-contained unit has less plumbing, which minimizes leaks. Oil is fed into the fuel system at a 100 to 1 ratio at idle and 50 to 1 at wide open throttle. It is introduced at the fuel pump rather than at sev-



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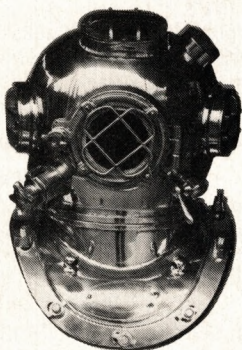
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MERCURY 90HP

eral injection points, to minimize dependence on multiple check valves. The result is better oil mixing, less susceptible to dirt and contamination.

The onboard oil tank has a one gallon capacity, allowing six hours running time at wide open throttle. An external sight gauge allows you to check the level at a glance, without opening the cowling. In case you are negligent and forget to check, an audible sensor buzzes constantly during the last hour.

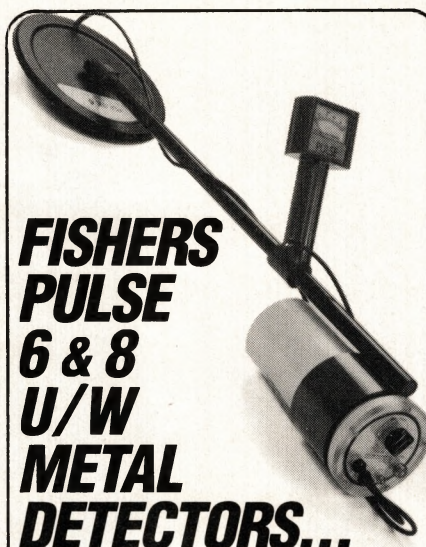
An important trend in today's outboards is downsizing. At 266 pounds, the Merc 90 is lighter than its competition, owing to its three cylinder design. It is quieter than last year's Merc 75, because of more sound-deadening material inside the cowl. The smoothness of the 90 is owing to its balanced crankshaft. It will run on 78 octane (regular) fuel and its fuel economy matches the old 75 horsepower four. Water passages are substantially larger, resulting in much more tolerance to passing foreign debris in the cooling system.

A new reed block assembly atomizes the fuel into the combustion chambers for more even burning and better economy. There is a large cavitation plate on the lower unit for better holding in tight turns. Finally, Mercury offers five degrees more trim and ten degrees more tilt on its power trim than any other outboard.

MERCURY 90

Propshaft horsepower	90
Cylinders	3 in line
Bore & stroke	3.38 x 2.65" (86 x 67mm)
Displacement	71.1 cu. in. (1,165 cc)
Full throttle rpm range	4,750-5,250
Gear ratio	2.3:1
Weight	265 lbs. (120 kg)
Recommended transom height	20"
Standard features	Fishline cutter
	Hydraulic shock absorber
	Loop charge induction
	Jet prop exhaust
	Oil injection, electric start
	Remote steering, shift & throttle
	Power trim and tilt
Price as tested	\$5,689

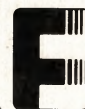
Sticker price of the Mercury 90 with remote control and power tilt is \$5,689. Like all Mercs, it is backed by 6,000 dealers worldwide. Many parts are interchangeable throughout the line, making it easier for service centers to stock needed spares. This enhances Mercury's reputation for reliability. The 90 works best with boats 16 to 18 feet in length or inflatables from 17 to 20 feet. With this motor mounted on the transom, your dive boat can become a seagoing starship. 



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TECHNIFACTS

(Continued from Page 37)

the platforms, particularly for procedures in which cavities, cracks, porosity and slag intrusion can be detected. Again, the interpretation of the exposed and developed film requires a great deal of training and experience.

CATHODIC PROTECTION SURVEYS

An initial cathodic protection system will have been installed on an offshore structure in accordance with engineering plans. It will probably be a combination of impressed current and sacrificial anode systems. The primary job of the diver is to inspect the anodes of the system (whether impressed current or sacrificial anode type) for proper connections, present condition of the anode and to take readings of the voltage potential between the surrounding medium (water) and the steel structure. There are several different systems for measuring the potential, the one to be used by the diver depending on the rig and the contractor doing the CP survey.

Readings obtained can be recorded by the diver during the inspection or transmitted topside via the diver's telephone and recorded by a technician. Analysis of data obtained will usually be done by the corrosion engineer.



NDT TRAINING

One diving school providing extensive NDT training is the College of Oceaneering, 277 South Fries Avenue, Wilmington, CA 90744. This school provides four courses covering the techniques and instruments with which a diver needs to be familiar to enter the NDT field.

The College of Oceaneering became the first school outside Europe to receive official approval by Certification Scheme for Weldment Inspection Personnel (CSWIP). The course has been restructured to meet the stiff CSWIP qualifications, and a graduate of it can immediately take the CSWIP examination. In addition to CSWIP, the course meets or exceeds training requirements for Det norske Veritas (DnV), Lloyds Register of London and the American Society of Nondestructive Testing (ASNT).

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College of Oceaneering
Los Angeles Harbor, 272 S. Fries Ave.
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Every once in a while I see a boat less than 23 feet long that I just know will make a good dive boat. They don't come along every day, though. By the time you add four or five people to all the tanks and gear it takes to go out and make a couple of dives, boats of this size tend to get cluttered fast.

Sure, center console models have lots of space, but they don't have enough places to sit and they rarely have adequate dry storage. Anything with a cuddy cabin will give you storage, but the cabin eats up the deck space. So, how do you design a small boat with seating, space and dry storage? Ask Aquasport.

The 222 Sandpiper is just about as perfect as they come for four divers and, if you really want to, you can even squeeze in one more. There's a place for everyone to sit, plenty of room along the gunwales for tank racks, plenty of area forward for gear bags and enough below seat and below deck storage to get all those boating and diving necessities out of the way. Utilizing the space both in front of and behind the dual consoles for seating, everyone has a corner. If the weather becomes a bit too foul unexpectedly, there is still plenty of room for everyone to move aft behind the windscreen, placing all the waterproof gear forward.

Built almost completely of fiberglass, including the stringers (the only wood below the waterline is the transom reinforcing), the Sandpiper is rugged, runs relatively dry and is designed to go out and fight much rougher seas than you or I care to experience. Designed around a 19 degree deadrise deep V-hull, its classic lines and construction have been proven repeatedly. Very seaworthy, the V-hull has long been known to be very stable when conditions are unfavorable.

At a total overall length of 22'2", the Sandpiper has an eight foot beam. Drawing only 12 inches of water and powered by a single outboard, it is highly maneuverable and capable of getting into some very tight places. With the space below deck completely flotation foamed, the boat is as unsinkable as can be made. As long as it is properly balanced, the 222 will continue to float upright even though it is completely swamped.

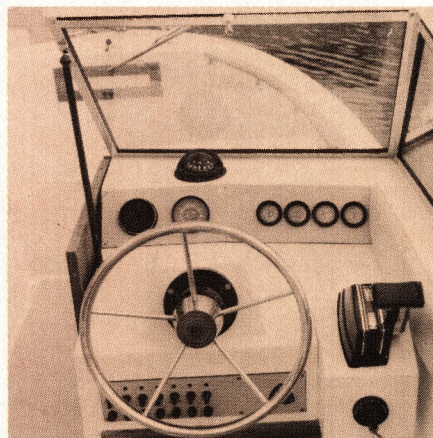
Weighing 2,200 pounds empty, this trailerable craft is heavy enough to stay on the water, yet light enough to get maximum benefit from its outboard power. With a top recommended engine power of 240 hp, Aquasport suggests engines of 175 to 200 hp. Having a 90 gallon built-in fuel capacity, also completely foamed into the hull, the 222 can take you and your crew on quite a lengthy outing with just about any engine.

One of the surprises about the Sandpiper 222 is the amount of equipment that comes standard with its basic package. Of the 53 items listed on the specifications sheet for the boat, only 11 are optional: 42 are standard equipment. That



Aquasport's 222 Sandpiper

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE LUCAS



The Sandpiper has a twin console design that maximizes open deck space fore and aft. It has dry storage beneath the seats and full instrumentation.

means you can almost take delivery and back it off the trailer ready to go diving.

The Big Catch Equipment Package, as Aquasport has dubbed it, includes anchor locker, dock line locker, storage for a portable head (marine toilet) and pressurized freshwater system with sink for

washing down gear or cleaning your catch before coming back to the dock. The boat's 14 gallon freshwater storage supply is quite adequate for a day. A separate pressurized raw water washdown system also allows for quick cleanup of

(Continued on Page 71)

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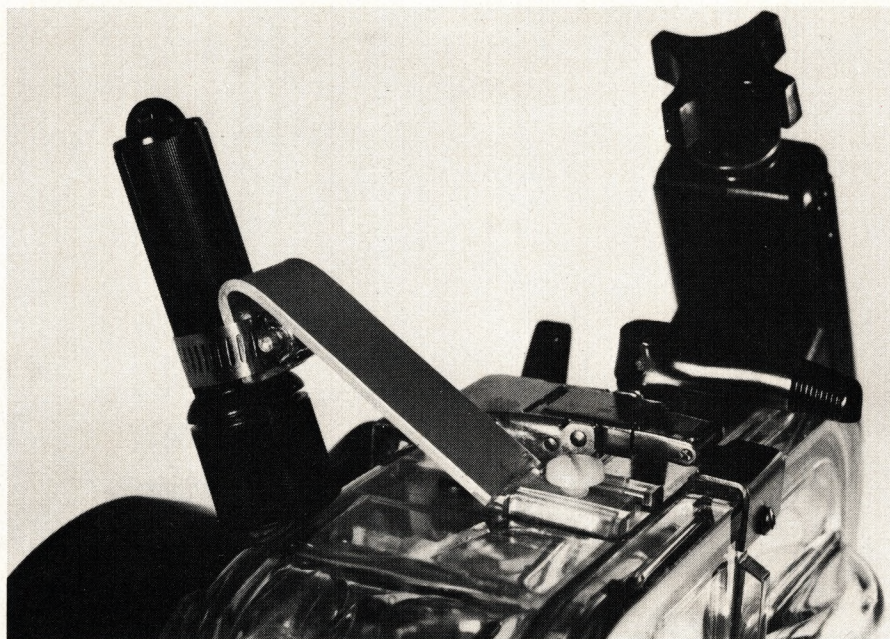
Mini-Light Bracket

Light Up Your F/Stop & Shutter Speed Display

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY MARTIN G. EVENSEN

Anyone who dabbles in underwater photography knows there are many challenges the photographer has to overcome. Finding a solution is rarely easy. One problem I have with my setup—a Nikon F3 in a Ikelite housing—is not being able to read the f/stop and shutter speed display in the viewfinder. The Nikon uses ambient light for illuminating the display. This works fine topside and in bright water, but when it gets dark the numbers become harder to see.

To shed a little light on the subject, fashion a bracket from a one by five inch piece of stock aluminum. File one end so it will fit into the accessory shoe on top of the housing. Drill and tap a hole for a 1/4 x 20 inch nylon bolt (nylon won't damage



This homemade bracket allows the photographer to firmly position a small light over the front of the housing to illuminate the f/stop and shutter speed displays on the camera.

the housing) at this end to act as a lock so the bracket can't slip out when the bolt is screwed down. After bending the aluminum in a vise to the desired shape, use a #10 hose clamp to fasten a small underwater flashlight to the bracket so it will shine inside the top of the housing and illuminate the viewfinder. This setup is

small, doesn't get in the way and allows you to read the information in any light. An added bonus is being able to see inside the housing to detect any leakage and avoid damage. Making my own accessory dive gear has always been a favorite pastime. Once you start, you can't stop. Try it!

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As seen at the DEMA Show.



Bahamas

SDM'S Guide To The Sunshine Islands



YELLOW CONEY
Photographed By Steve Frink

In speaking of the Bahamas, we are considering more than 700 islands and 2,000 islets, cays and rock formations, spread in a 750 mile arc and encompassing more than 100,000 square miles of crystalline tropical ocean. Geologically, these are the peaks of what was an ancient mountain range when sea level was perhaps 400 feet lower than it is today. Four glacial and interglacial periods intervened and what was likely a huge, singular island 25,000 years ago became significantly submerged with the ice age thaw.

That which remains above sea level today is an idyllic representation of tropical splendor. Most of the islands

feature broad expanses of white, sandy beach lined with palm and casuarina trees, mangrove canals and flowers. Some of the islands are flat and others have a hilly profile, but none are what could be considered mountainous.

The mountains of the Bahamas are beneath the sea. Here are the massive shallow sand flats of the Great Bahama Bank, the deep indigo of the Tongue of the Ocean and its vertical wall face, and the turquoise of the medium depth coral reefs that surround the

islands. The U/W wealth of the Bahamas is as immense and diverse as the topside counterpart. Some islands are best known for their magnificent drop-offs, others for shallow reefs and dense fish populations. Some areas feature high concentrations of historical shipwrecks and in other spots ships have been sunk on purpose as an added attraction to traveling scuba divers. There are blue holes (both inland and oceanic), barrier reefs, drift dives in the Gulf Stream, caves and grottoes, and literally hundreds of miles of easily accessible coral reef. To have visited one Bahama island is an introduction, but hardly a representative sample. Each one has a distinct and identifiable



A collection of islands, islets and cays spread in a 750 mile arc, the Bahamas are a potpourri of delightful tropical sights and recreational activities above and below the water's surface. Each island offers its own distinct appeal and vacation potential. The nearest Bahama Island is within 50 miles of the Florida coast and all are easy to reach by air and/or sea.



topside and underwater appeal and each bears terrific dive vacation potential. As much as these islands are alike, they are different; and educated consumers have scores of options to consider before choosing their Bahama dive vacation.

The most apparent advantage to these islands is accessibility. Not only are they close to the continental United States (the nearest within 50 miles of Florida's east coast), but there are ample travel connections via commercial and charter aircraft, cruise ships, private boats and live-aboard dive boats. Nassau and Freeport are the primary hubs of air traffic within the Bahamas; major gateway cities include

New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Atlanta, Orlando, Tampa, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Miami. Many of the Family Islands (also known as the Out-Islands or those islands other than Grand Bahama and New Providence) feature direct air connections by both commercial and charter aircraft from the mainland U.S. and additional access via connecting flights through Nassau and Freeport.

There are even more marinas than there are airports throughout the Bahamas, for

these islands are considered among the world's best cruising waters for both sail and power boats. The fishing and diving are undeniably world class, the waters clear and warm, and there are hundreds of secluded, protected anchorages. There are ample marine services for fuel and parts, fresh water and fishing supplies. Of course, the proximity of the islands is a big factor in attracting yachtsmen, cruise ships and live-aboard dive vessels. Bimini is within two hours of Ft. Lauderdale in a moderately fast boat with a planing hull, and in the islands, the cruising is day trips and short overnight excursions.

Given the volume of both air and boat traffic into the Baha-

dive the
Bahamas
land of eternal summer

text and photography by Stephen Frink

Bahamas

mas, an extensive network of customs and immigrations has evolved to facilitate tourism. This system of Bahamas Port of Entry allows access to the Abacos, Andros, Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Cay, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, New Providence, San Salvador and Long Island directly from a foreign country. Of course, once admitted to the Bahamas through a Port of Entry, tourists are free to travel to any of the islands. For U.S. and Canadian citizens a passport or copy of a birth certificate are considered proof of citizenship and are required for entry. A voter's registration card is also acceptable for U.S. citizens and for Canadians, a medical card will suffice. Non-U.S. citizens will be required to produce a passport and visa when appropriate. Note that in no circumstance is a driver's license acceptable proof of citizenship for entry into the Bahamas.

Traveling to the Bahamas is like travel to any other foreign country in that guns and recreational drugs are forbidden. Visitors to the Bahamas should be further advised that large collections of camera gear will be scrutinized. Customs officials want assurance that photographic equipment will not be sold in the islands in circumvention of proper import duties. As with all foreign travel, it is a good idea to pre-register the serial numbers of cameras and lenses, as well as expensive jewelry, with U.S. Customs. The official registration forms should accompany travel documents. This paperwork will facilitate not only entry into foreign countries, but re-entry into the United States. The dive traveler with a single underwater camera and strobe and a moderate topside system generally need not be concerned. Divers seeking general information about Bahamas travel will find the office of Bahamas Sports Information, (800) 32-SPORT, most helpful.

Other aspects of Bahamas travel will be reassuringly familiar. The language is English, although often spoken with a distinct native lilt. The currency of the Bahamas is at parity with the U.S. dollar, with Bahamian and American dollars being used interchangeably in most instances. Not all merchants or taxi drivers will be able to return change in U.S. currency. Most hotels, however, will be able to exchange for the currency of choice. Most major credit cards are recognized, as are traveler's checks. Personal checks are rarely acceptable. The electricity is 110 volts at 60 cycles, as is standard in North America. On some islands the power is supplied by the municipal generator, while at other island resorts private generators are maintained. There may be an occasional surge or fluctuation, and in remote areas of the islands it is possible the

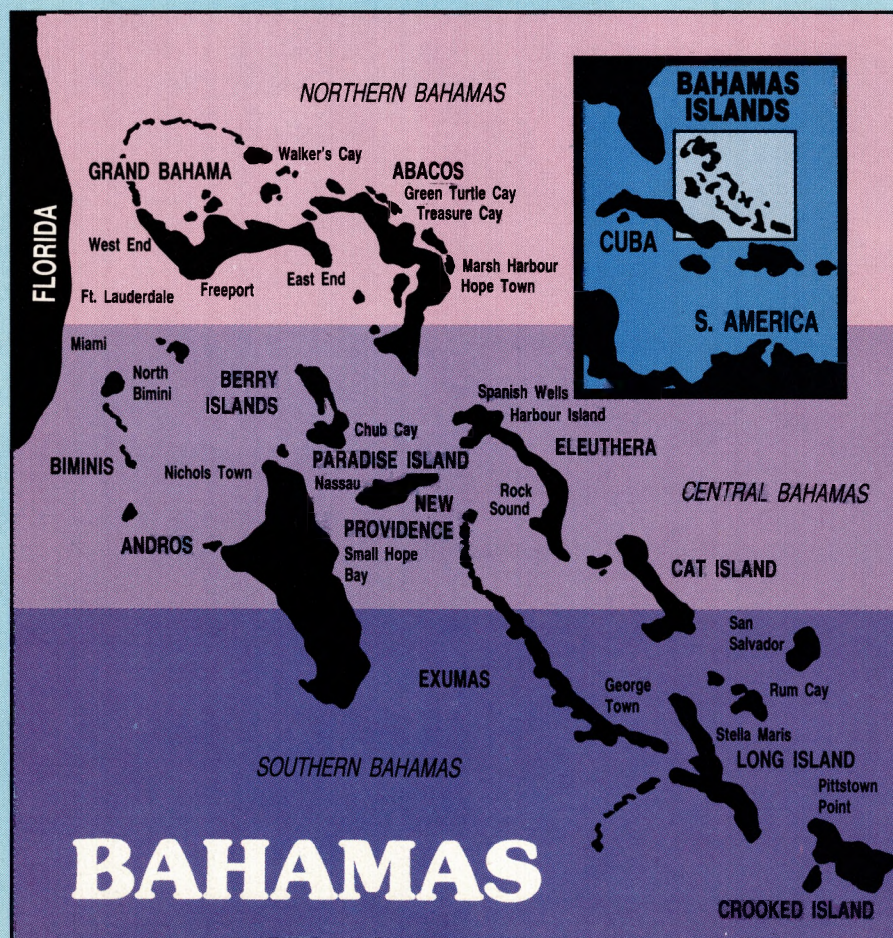
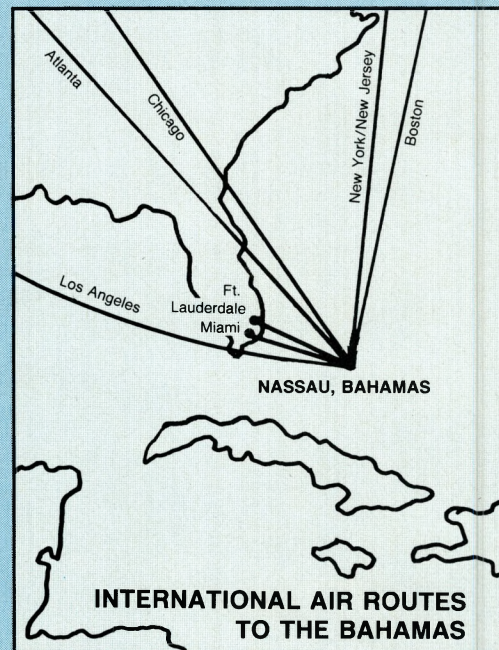
generator may not be scheduled to run the entire night. But in general, the electrical service throughout the Bahamas is quite good and I have never had a problem operating battery chargers or hair dryers anywhere.

The biggest lures to these islands initially were the warmth of the sun and the incredible beauty of the sea. With these two elements guaranteed by nature, the government and private sector have geared up to gracefully accommodate the inevitable flood of tourists. Whether you are a diver or a nondiver with an interest in shopping, beachcombing, tennis, golf, watersports, horseback riding, business and banking or general relaxation, it is truly "Better in the Bahamas."

The weather patterns in these islands generally follow two seasons, winter and summer. The high season for general tourism is winter, but there is better overall consistency for excellence in diving conditions in the summer. Whether to escape the cold of the frozen north in the winter by visiting a sun-baked tropical island with the average daytime high of 78°F, or to visit the islands during the summer to luxuriate in 85°F ocean water with 150 foot visibility is a tough choice. In the winter, an occasional cool spell may make a sweater or light jacket advisable, but for the most part shorts and T-shirts will do. Water temperatures in the winter range from 76° to 68°F, and I usually find a one-eighth inch wetsuit ade-

quate. In the coldest months a one-quarter inch suit might be more comfortable for repetitive dives or U/W photography. During the summer wetsuits aren't needed for thermal protection, as the water temperature will range from 76° to 86°F, however, a light suit to protect against abrasion is always a good idea.

Dress in the Bahamas is usually casual, although if planning a night in the cas-



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Bahamas

nos or discos in Freeport or Nassau men may wish to pack slacks and a sport coat, and women, a dress. Otherwise, shorts, T-shirts or polo shirts, tennis shoes or deck shoes, and perhaps one pair of long pants should suffice for men. Women might like to pack a skirt in addition to shorts and a selection of cool, comfortable blouses. Cruise ships tend to be more formal, at least for dinner. Live-aboard dive boats are substantially less formal, with the emphasis on comfort.

To get a better feel for the islands that comprise the Bahamas, we will individually consider those most committed to providing diver services in order of geographic position, beginning in the south-east and working toward the northwest.

LONG ISLAND

More than 90 miles in length and some 400 square miles in area, Long Island is just 26 miles to the east of George Town, Exuma. Air connections to Long Island can be arranged through George Town, Nassau or by direct charter flight from Ft. Lauderdale to the STELLA MARIS INN AND ESTATE. Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) is one of the pioneer dive resorts of the Bahamas and the development sits on 3,000 lush acres connecting both the windward and leeward shores of Long Island. While the island is populated by 4,500 residents in 35 villages, Stella Maris is the undeniable hub of dive activity and general tourism.

Guests of the Stella Maris Inn and Estate are accommodated in a variety of hotel rooms, apartments and one bedroom cottages, townhouses, bungalows and villas. There are four swimming pools, two tennis courts, a 4,250 by 200 foot paved airstrip, a restaurant and lounges, and a marina with dive center. This year's big news at Stella Maris is the completion of the *Sol Mar III* (see SKIN DIVER, September 1986). This magnificent vessel has been under construction for seven years, but now the 65 foot *Sol Mar III* adds a new dimension to the diving services available at Stella Maris. The new dive boat will be used not only for day trips to the reefs surrounding Long Island, but will also sleep up to 18 guests in air-conditioned dormitory-style berthing for overnight cruises to Conception Island, Rum Cay and the surrounding islands of the Southern Bahamas.

The *Sol Mar III* supplements the four smaller day-dive boats in the Stella Maris fleet and makes access to the quite spectacular dive sites along Long Island easier than ever. **Shark Reef** is probably the most requested Stella Maris site and worth a trip to the resort for this dive alone. I never tire of dropping into the

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Bahamas

crystalline water and settling onto the sand at 25 feet with the security of the coral reef to my back. In this underwater amphitheater Stella Maris divemasters entice 8 to 10 sharks with total reliability and safety. The sharks have been so conditioned to the feeding activity they appear on the scene with the dropping of the anchor.

Long Island diving is especially varied, and now with the addition of the *Sol Mar III* and the range of accessible sites extended to include Conception Island and Rum Cay, there is no need to ever dive the same area twice, except by request. In addition to Shark Reef, my favorite dives include the **Comberbach**, a former island freighter intentionally sunk by Stella Maris and now sitting upright in 100 feet of water on the lee side of the island and attracting a wide variety of marine life; **Barracuda Heads**, with its school of resident horse-eye jacks; **Eagle Ray Reef** for the frequency of pelagic encounters; and, of course, the wall at **Conception Island**. Here, vertical drop-offs begin as shallow as 60 feet, visibility is tremendous, colorful sponges and black

corals adorn the wall face and marine life is excitingly evident.

RUM CAY

The RUM CAY CLUB provides the lure for divers to this small island 375 miles to the southeast of Ft. Lauderdale. The resort has a private airstrip and consists of three beachfront guesthouses, with each structure accommodating eight people in double rooms, plus two cottages for a total occupancy of only 14 guests. There is a central bar and lounge overlooking the Atlantic, tastefully decorated and including a television with VCR, boutique, video games and lending library. There is an adjacent enlarged deck with hot tub; a separate building housing the dining room and kitchen; and a modern, complete dive center with photo lab and automatic E-6 film processor.

Diving services are accomplished aboard two 34 foot outboard powered flattop dive boats and more than 30 mooring buoys mark the best of the dive spots. Since the Rum Cay Club is the only dive operation on the island, there is no competition for the best of the day's diving. Most of the dive groups are quite small and the pace relaxed. Rum Cay bears the additional advantage of offering superior diving in the lee of the prevailing winter winds. In the summer, these sites are windward, but since the breezes are slight and the cooling effect welcome in

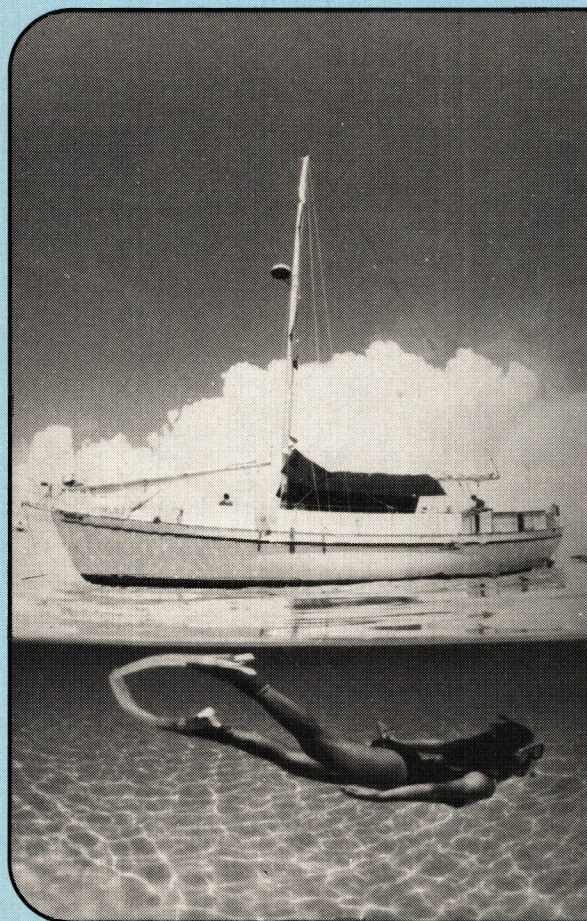
the summer, Rum Cay is ideally situated for diver convenience.

The general dive profiles of Rum Cay would include a selection of magnificent vertical walls, vibrantly alive shallow reefs where the divemasters have established fish feeding stations, caves, pinnacles, abundant sponges and gorgonians, and typically superior visibility.

SAN SALVADOR

San Salvador Island in the Southern Bahamas has achieved dual fame—once for being the first landfall for Christopher Columbus in the New World and much later for being the home of a world class dive resort, the Riding Rock Inn. The National Geographic Society speculates that San Salvador may not have been the actual landfall, but I'm sure traveling divers could hardly care less, for the consuming excitement is the resurrection of the Riding Rock Inn and the resumption of reliable, safe and professional diving services for the magnificent underwater resource just offshore.

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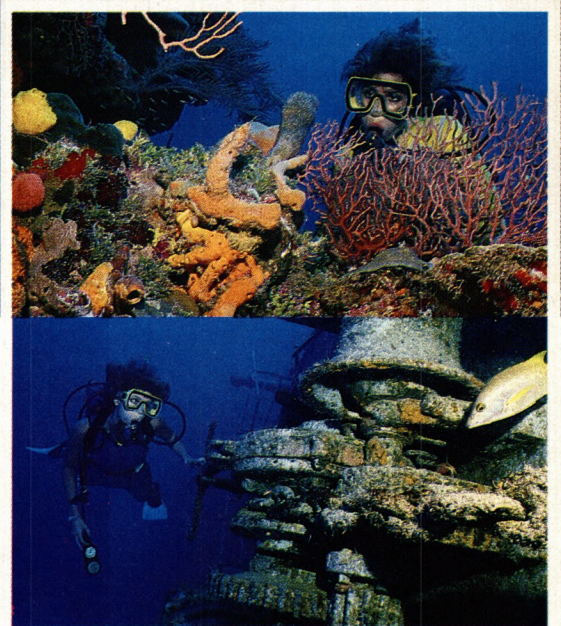
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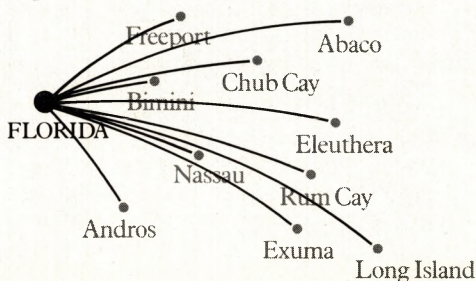
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Bahamas

48 divers. The dive boats are especially impressive and include the *San Sally*, a 47 foot converted lobster boat with a fiberglass deep-V, a 16 foot beam and more than ample power from its 8-71 diesel engine. There is also the *Island Time*, a 30 foot fiberglass Island Hopper powered by twin Perkins diesels.

Each of these vessels has been thoughtfully outfitted for convenience by dive operations manager Al Zamrok. They include freshwater camera rinse tanks, walk-through transoms with dive platforms and extended ladders and tank racks. Even though the trips to the reefs are short owing to the proximity of the marina to the island's diving, these boats are designed for safety and comfort.

The Riding Rock Inn is owned by lifelong San Salvador resident Carter Williams and the pride of ownership is apparent. Carter has put together a strong management team, from hotel to dive operations, to stateside reservations, with the resulting smooth efficiency a pleasure for the traveling diver. The Riding Rock Inn is unabashedly a dive resort and this is its target market.

The typical day of diving includes a two tank dive in the morning and a single tank afternoon dive. One or two times a week the afternoon dive may be replaced with a night dive. The wall on San Salvador begins shallow, in places no more than 40 feet deep, and plunges vertically to 130 feet.

San Salvador offers an interesting wreck dive in addition to its many walls. The *Frascate* lies in only 15-18 feet of water and represents the scattered wreckage of a steel freighter run aground on New Year's Day, 1902. The boilers are perhaps the most prominent aspect of the wreck today, although there is a motor, stern section with rudder, part of the hull and ballast rock, and an anchor chain leading to the bow. The marine life on the *Frascate* is fascinating and includes a six foot green moray (it has been there at least eight years to my knowledge), tiger groupers, schools of sergeant major and black durgon, and the beautifully pastel coral crab.

Snapshot Reef was the source of more published photographs than possibly any other reef its size when Paul Tzimoulis operated his underwater photo school out of the Riding Rock Inn. Today the reef is as full of photo potential as ever. It seems amazing that even after a three year hiatus, the grouper are as friendly as ever and the spotted moray

eels just as cooperative. Snapshot Reef, the *Frascate* and many of the wall dives such as **Telephone Pole** are on the protected west side of the island in an area called Fernandez Bay.

The south side of the island is known as French Bay, and although it is often exposed to the prevailing winds in the winter, when it is divisible, it can be fantastic. An example of the French Bay possibilities was made obvious with a single dive on **Double Caves**. At 60 feet two caves open to the inside of the reef and exit along the wall at about 100 feet. The wall face is lined with red gorgonians and tube and encrusting sponges, all of which provide color accents for wide angle shots. But, it was the pelagic parade we found most exciting. Eagle rays were abundant, and we spotted a turtle and blacktip sharks in the distance.

EXUMA

The Exuma chain actually consists of 365 isles, but most of the activity takes place on the two largest ones, Great Exuma and Little Exuma. George Town is the chief settlement of the Exumas. On Great Exuma, it has an international airport, a harbor and marina, several fine hotels and guesthouses, the seat of government and both of the island's diving services, Exuma Divers and Exuma Aquatics.

EXUMA AQUATICS is in a waterfront shop directly across the street from the Pieces of Eight Hotel. While Exuma Aquatics structures dive packages with most of the hotels on the island, Pieces of Eight and the Out Island Inn comprise the largest share of their bookings. Both hotels share the same ownership but are operated separately and have distinctly different ambiances. The Out Island Inn is on a lovely sand beach with 88 air-conditioned double rooms, restaurant and lounge, tennis courts and a beachfront watersports concession. Pieces of Eight is on a bluff overlooking the ocean and has 33 double air-conditioned rooms, a freshwater swimming pool, restaurant and lounge.

The Exuma Aquatics fleet of dive boats includes one 34 foot flattop with twin 150 horsepower outboards, a 24 foot diesel V-hull and a 30 foot deep-V custom sportfisherman powered by twin 275 horsepower outboards.

EXUMA DIVERS is owned and operated by Wendel McGregor and is based in a small facility across the street from the Peace and Plenty Hotel. Packages are available with the Peace and Plenty, and day dive and package guests will be accommodated on Wendel's 38 foot houseboat or his 24 foot outboard powered V-hull.

The diving around Great Exuma is of a depth range from 30 to 50 feet with coral ledges, high profile coral heads and large populations of tropical fish. Snappers, grunts and goatfish seem most abundant, but the most willing photo subjects are

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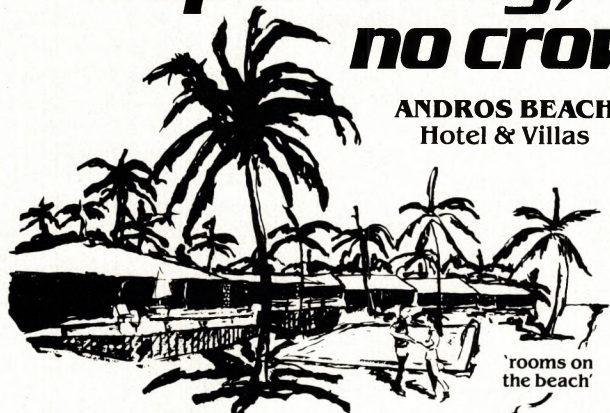
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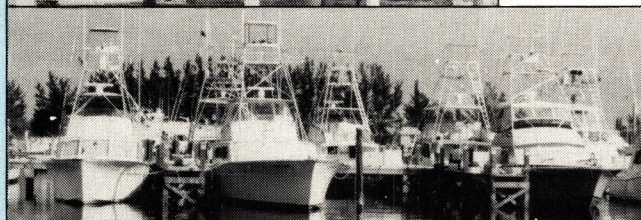
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Bahamas

the friendly French and gray angelfish. Favorite sites include **Stingray Reef**, a large coral concentration in a cut between two islands, best known for the tremendous fish populations and the frequent sightings of southern stingrays; **Lobster Reef**, a medium depth structure typified by barrel sponges, gorgonians and schooling fish such as snappers, grunts and spadefish; and **Black Rocks**, 90 feet to the sand bottom with coral heads rising nearly 50 feet and nurse sharks and black coral evident throughout. Oceanic blue holes add diversity to the Exuma dive portfolio, with the **Mystery Cave** and **Angelfish Blue Hole** among the favorites.

Further access to the 130 mile chain of islands that make up the Exumas is possible by live-aboard dive boat. The *Sol Mar III* dives here on occasion, as does the *Sea Dragon*. The *Bottom Time*, *Bottom Time II* and *April Seas* also schedule tours of the Exumas upon request.

ANDROS

Andros is the largest island in the Bahamas, more than 104 miles long and

some 40 miles wide, yet it is probably the least explored. Just 50 miles from Nassau, yet light years removed from the bustle and commerce of the Bahamas capital city, Andros offers many advantages to the sportsman. Miles of shallow sand flats lie off the Great Bahama Bank and anglers come from all over the world to try their skills against the bonefish in residence there. Sailfish and both blue and white marlin can be caught on all sides of the island, but the area surrounding the deep oceanic trench known as the Tongue of the Ocean is the most productive. Here, baitfish washed off the sand banks attract deep water predators, making for remarkable dive encounters around Andros and also around Chub Cay and New Providence Island.

There are just two dive resorts amid this mass of mostly unexplored underwater wonder. Andros Undersea Adventures is the Neal Watson dive operation based at the Andros Beach Hotel. Small Hope Bay Lodge, the oldest dive operation in the Bahamas, has been operated continuously by Dick and Rosie Birch for more than 27 years. Since the Andros Beach Hotel is near Nicholl's Town and Small Hope Bay near Fresh Creek, the two operations do share dive itineraries and it is extremely unlikely another dive boat will be visible on the same horizon.

SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE is along a

crescent shaped strand of beach with a grove of casuarinas to the rear. A long dock bisects the beach and the dive shop and there are compressors at the end of the dock. The focal point is the lodge, built of Andros pine and coral rock. Begun as the first organized dive resort in the Bahamas in 1960, Dick Birch's stated objectives were to provide "good food, good beds and good diving." The Small Hope Bay philosophy has not changed in this regard and now the 20 cottages are kept full with word-of-mouth referrals and repeat business. Diving is a big part of the Small Hope Bay experience—but not the only part—and the clientele includes not only experienced divers but non-diving guests who hear of the underwater delights and often elect to try a resort scuba course.

The Andros Beach Hotel is a beautiful small hotel sitting on four acres of landscaped lawn and fronted by 400 feet of sandy beach. There is a freshwater swimming pool, 15 guest units including 10 double hotel rooms, three cottages and one, two bedroom villa, a dive center (ANDROS UNDERSEA ADVENTURES), and a dining room/lounge. The primary dive boat is the *Wall Diver*, a 40 foot deep-V fiberglass vessel (commercial work boat) well-designed for diver convenience with walk-through transom, tank racks and extended dive ladders. As needed, either of the two dive boats at Chub Cay Undersea Adventures may also be brought into service at Andros, as both are Neal Watson dive centers and only 18 miles apart.

Neal Watson is the gregarious and competent dive magnate with operations on Bimini and Chub Cay in addition to Andros. On Bimini and Chub Cay, Neal operates only the diving concessions but on Andros, the Watsons are also hoteliers.

Andros diving is composed of wrecks, reefs and drop-offs. Two of the wrecks I most enjoyed were rich with marine life. The **Barge** is an old landing craft that is home to a pair of resident green morays. The Small Hope Bay Lodge crew has been handfeeding groupers here for many years. The **Potomac** was run aground in shallow water in 1952. Constant wave action broke the ship in two, and although both sections are partially exposed at low tide, the stern is deeper and better protected from surge. The huge boilers invariably host nurse sharks and schools of parrotfish are commonly seen grazing on the massive hulk.

NEW PROVIDENCE

New Providence Island is the home of Nassau, the center of government in the Bahamas and also a complete vacation getaway. Nassau and Freeport offer the greatest variety of air connections in the Bahamas with several carriers flying in and out daily. There are thousands of hotel rooms on New Providence, most clustered around Nassau, Paradise Island

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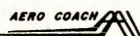
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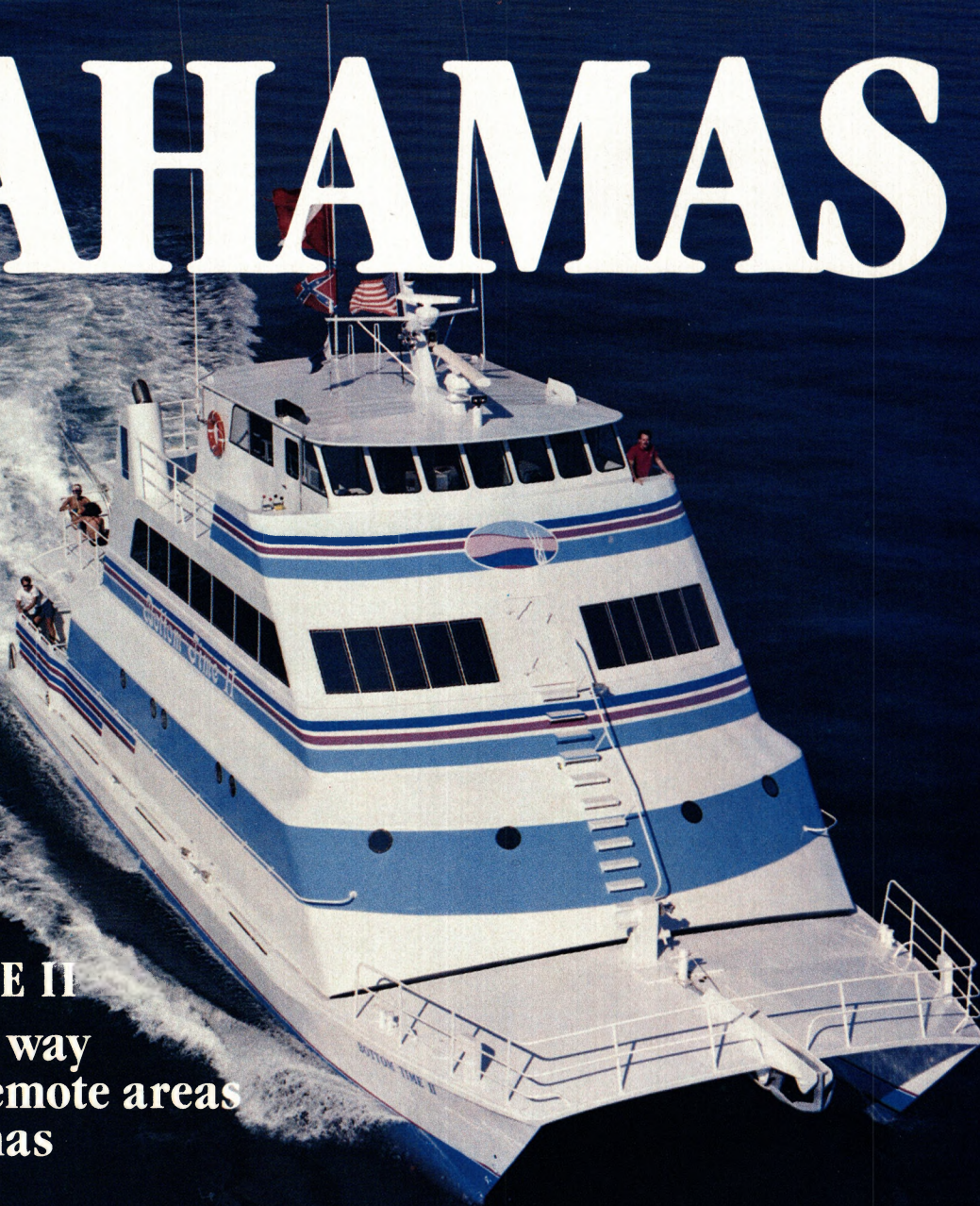
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Bahamas

and Cable Beach. These may be magni-
ficent resort complexes or intimate local
lodges, but each will likely cater to the
sporting interests of its guests with pack-
ages of activities. Guests can try wind-
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diving on New Providence. In addition,
the shopping is quite good and the night-
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There is good diving to be found on
New Providence both on the windward
side of the island (near Nassau) and on
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Beach resorts including BAHAMA DIV-
ERS; NASSAU DIVE SUPPLY/DIVER'S
HAVEN; SUN DIVERS LTD.; DIVE, DIVE,
DIVE (formerly Smuggler's Rest); and
NEW PROVIDENCE DIVERS. New Provi-
dence Divers maintains a concession on
the beach at the South Ocean Beach Ho-
tel even though the hotel is presently
closed, and transports its guests by van
to the dive center. Dive, Dive, Dive oper-
ates courtesy vans for the same purpose
and like New Providence Divers, concen-
trates on the wonderful diving to be found
on the leeward reefs. The other operators
will generally dive the wrecks and reefs
closer to Nassau, although when the
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dive sites on the north, east or south
sides of the islands that offer the best
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includes a 44 foot twin diesel houseboat
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single diesel and a 25 foot outboard pow-
ered V-hull.

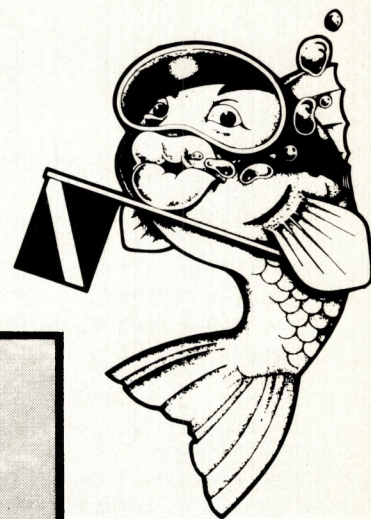
The diving available in New Providence
is complete and quite excellent. **Gould-
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cent concentrations of elkhorn coral any-
where and one you've seen in many
movies including *Never Say Never Again*,
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Bahamas

work for the sunken airplane in *Thunderball*. It is encrusted totally with soft corals and sponges, and while the novelty would only hold for a full dive for the macro photographer, it is an interesting quick study. **The Runway** is a special dive for the concentrations of easily approachable stingrays, and there are scores of top quality wall dives along the Tongue of the Ocean. **Tunnel Wall** is an example and features a honeycombed system of tunnels, caverns and crevices along a sheer, vertical wall. The top of the precipice begins in 35 feet and drops to 6,000 feet with all manner of tube and encrusting sponges adorning the face.

ELEUTHERA

Settled by English adventures more than 300 years ago, Eleuthera is a long, narrow island stretching 110 miles from the Bluff to Bannerman Town and rarely more than two miles wide. Almost touching the north end is the charming and beautiful Harbour Island. Its principal settlement, Dunmore Town, is the original capital of the Bahamas. Today it is a picturesque village of pastel hues, flowered lanes and quaint New England architecture. Spanish Wells is another small island just off the north end of Eleuthera, named for the Spanish galleon sailors who came ashore to fill their casks of fresh water after sea voyages so long ago. There are four dive operations on Eleuthera, two on Harbour Island and one on Spanish Wells.

Guests destined for either Spanish Wells or Harbour Island will fly into North Eleuthera and connect via taxi and ferryboat to the intended island resort. On Harbour Island the diving services are provided by Valentine's Dive Center and the Romora Bay Club, each based at a host hotel. In addition, there are six other hotels, each with 20 to 30 rooms and either Valentine's or Romora Bay dive operations will be happy to accommodate divers staying at any of them.

The ROMORA BAY CLUB has 30 double units spread out over a nine acre former citrus plantation. Diving is one of many activities offered to the guests; general relaxation, sailing, windsurfing and beachcombing round out the activities.

VALENTINE'S YACHT CLUB AND INN is on the water's edge in the heart of Dunmore Town. There are 23 newly renovated rooms, a new marina and dockside lounge, freshwater swimming pool, spa, tennis courts, restaurant and lounge. Valentine's Dive Center is a professional, quality operation utilizing a 36 foot Thompson trawler as its primary dive vessel. The *Double Trouble* is diesel powered and set up with freshwater shower, head, stereo, tank racks and dive platform. Jeff Parrish is dive operations manager and also directs the scuba instruction programs. Valentine's conducts hundreds of resort courses, as well as full certifications, annually.

The diving off Harbour Island includes shallow, medium and deep sites, as well as considerable fish feeding activity. The shallow dives will be of interest to both resort course students and experienced divers owing to the excellent coral representation and active marine life. Sites such as the **Plateau**, with its sandy bot-

tom at 80 feet and huge coral heads rising to within 30 feet of the surface, will impress even the most jaded diver.

On Spanish Wells the Harbour Club and the Spanish Wells Beach Resort are under the same management, but are separate properties. The same dive operation serves both properties and offers two 34 foot flattops, a 22 foot Aquasport powered by outboard, and a 28 foot Bertram that is called into diver service for overloads, but is generally used to run sportfishermen.

The Spanish Wells Beach Resort is on a magnificent sand beach, for both Spanish Wells and Harbour Island feature spectacularly beautiful sand beaches along their windward shores. There are 22 hotel rooms and seven cottages, the restaurant and lounge, as well as the dive shop and darkroom facility at the Beach Resort. The Harbour Club offers 13 hotel rooms and four, one bedroom apartments, a restaurant, and two bars.

The **Current Cut** is a famous dive accessible from both Harbour Island and Spanish Wells. Tidal currents are funneled into a narrow pass separating two islands and the water can flow at between 6 to 10 knots. Divers drift in this heady current at depths from 30 to 60 feet, content merely to maneuver, rarely to stop.

More unique to Spanish Wells are the dive sites along the Devil's Backbone, the reef structure just in front of the Spanish Wells Beach Resort. The **Train Wreck** is probably the most unusual and noteworthy. Legend holds that it was a train stolen by the Confederates during the Civil War and being shipped to Cuba for sale. The barge carrying the train sank in shallow water and now the huge wheels and wreckage sit upright in the sand and provide a home to the hand-feeding groupers, angelfish and triggerfish. The **Freighter Wreck** is a longer boat ride, but the 260 foot Lebanese freighter run hard aground in only 25 feet of water is remarkable for its macro subjects and active fish populations.

BERRY ISLANDS

This chain of small islands lies just 30 miles from Nassau and is equally enchanting to divers and fishermen. Most of the area is undeveloped but the Chub Cay Club stands out as a pocket of comfortable resort civilization in the midst of this pristine grandeur. The Chub Cay Club is a self-reliant resort that has operated for 25 years as a private club catering primarily to anglers and yachtsmen. Now the facilities are open to both members and non-members with a public 15 room hotel (double occupancy accommodations), freshwater swimming pool, classroom and E-6 darkroom. There is a dive shop at dockside operated by Neal Watson's CHUB CAY UNDERSEA ADVENTURES, as well as the two deep-V diesel powered custom dive boats used



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to transport divers to the beautiful wall and reefs just minutes offshore.

The **Chub Cay Wall** starts in only 80 feet of water and is predictably rich in pelagic life, especially eagle rays. Sharks are frequently sighted along the wall and even the elusive hammerhead may be seen on occasion.

Canyons and Caves is typical of the scores of medium depth reefs being developed as dive sites by Chub Cay Undersea Adventures. Here is a natural marine aquarium with angelfish, glass minnows, spadefish, barracudas, groupers, eels and triggerfish in steady procession.

For snorkelers, **Mama Rhoda Rock** offers undamaged stands of elkhorn coral just inches below the surface.

BIMINI

The Bahamas are closer to the United States at Bimini than at any other point. The island sits only 42 miles from the Florida coast, making it accessible by Chalk's seaplanes, private or charter boat or private or charter plane. The Gulf Stream washes through near Bimini, bringing incredibly blue, translucent waters and creating what Neal Watson refers to as the "Bimini Misconception." Neal operates BIMINI UNDERSEA ADVENTURES and has noticed over the years that his customers are surprised at the high quality of the diving Bimini offers. Apparently many tourists equate significant travel time with improved diving potential, or "How can it be this good if it is this close?" The Gulf Stream is the answer, for not only does it bring blue water, but it nourishes the coral reefs and marine life in such thick profusion along Bimini, the Victories and Cat Cay.

The wall is deep here, beginning at 100 to 120 feet, but quite amazing. I had been to Bimini several times but had always passed on the wall dive, assuming that since it was deep I'd have little bottom time and less light to generate underwater photos. This year I did it as a drift (there is almost always current flowing along the Bimini Wall owing to the Gulf Stream) and saw so much that I know it will be a part of any future Bimini dive plans. Here the gorgonians and sponges grow in thick concentrations because of the constant flow of nutrients borne along the currents. Schools of angelfish and groupers work along the lip of the wall, and while it may be hard to stop and set up for a photo, the rich tableau of marine life effortlessly unfolding to the floating diver is truly unique. There are shallow reefs as well and some, such as **Rainbow Reef**, feature tremendous schools of tropical fish and predictable sightings of nurse sharks. The **Sapona** is a huge, derelict, cement hulled freighter sitting upright in only 15 to 20 feet of water. The hull is perforated in many spots, permitting access to the interior of the ship, and the massive concentration of marine life here makes a fascinating dive.

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GRAND BAHAMA

Grand Bahama lies at about the same latitude as Palm Beach, Florida and is only about 60 miles east of it. Accessible by daily flights from Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach and several major U.S. gateway cities, Freeport is very well served by air traffic. The tourist industry in Freeport is quite complete and sophisticated, with a wide range of resort hotels, miles of sand beach and watersports activities, tennis, golf, horseback riding, sightseeing and excellent duty free shopping. The casinos and nightly cabaret shows further contribute to the total island atmosphere of vacation!

Diving services on Grand Bahama are the province of the UNDERWATER EXPLORERS SOCIETY (UNEXSO) with its main center of operations in Freeport and a branch at the Jack Tar Village to serve the diving needs of the West End of the island. UNEXSO has been a dominant force in recreational diving for 23 years and many of the innovations the sport has enjoyed were born at UNEXSO on Freeport. UNEXSO of today is a modern complex housing an 18 foot deep training tank to augment its complete programs of resort courses and advanced scuba instruction programs. There is also a retail dive shop and boutique, guest gear storage area, second (and shallower) swimming pool also used for scuba instruction and resort checkouts, a popular bar and snack restaurant, three custom dive boats and a new and expanded photo facility devoted to both stills and video, including E-6 film processing.

The dive boats are conveniently docked near the compressor and guest gear storage areas and all three boats are utilized to transport the steady flow of divers scheduled for the thrice daily excursions. The reefs bear three distinct configurations: deep, medium and shallow, and there are fascinating wrecks as well, most notably **Theo's Wreck**. This is a 230 foot steel freighter intentionally sunk by the UNEXSO staff as a diving attraction. It presently sits on its port side, at the edge of a drop-off, in 100 feet of water. A school of horse-eye jacks has taken up residence on the wreck and barracudas, turtles, snappers and schools of baitfish are frequent visitors. A second wreck, the **Jose**, was intentionally scut-

tled as a dive site on June 19, 1986 in 65 feet of water. Already this steel hulled tugboat (45 x 20 feet) has begun to attract fish life and a green moray eel has chosen the stern as its lair.

The UNEXSO dive operation at the Jack Tar Village serves a dual role. Not only is it the dive service for the 400 room waterfront hotel, but it also offers diversity to the Freeport dive itineraries and access to the very exceptional reefs and walls of the West End of Grand Bahama. Now the legendary dives such as Memory Rock, Sherwood Forest and Shark Reef, formerly accessible only from live-aboard dive vessels, may be enjoyed by divers preferring a hotel base. There is reciprocity privileges between both UNEXSO operations so that customers with a week to spend can really see the best of Grand Bahama diving, regardless of the hotel base chosen.

ABACOS

The Abacos consist of a boomerang-shaped chain of islands and cays that stretches 130 miles from Walker's Cay to the north to Hole in the Wall at the south. Diving services are available in Walker's Cay, Marsh Harbour and Green Turtle Cay at present. Treasure Cay, which formerly operated its own dive shop, is referring divers to Green Turtle Cay as of this writing (Treasure Cay and Green Turtle Cay are fairly near, a short taxi and ferryboat ride apart). We will consider three of these diving services as representative of those in the Abacos.

WALKER'S CAY is a small island of 100 acres at the upper end of the Bahamas chain. The island itself is quite lush and green with sculpted lawns and hardwood trees and a maximum elevation of perhaps 80 feet. Walker's International Airline out of Ft. Lauderdale provides the transportation (along with private aircraft and yachts) to the resort. The hotel has 62 rooms, four villas, 75 boat slips in the marina, two swimming pools, two bars, a restaurant, gift shop, commissary, tennis courts, disco and game room and a fleet of boats to handle the fishing and diving requirements of guests.

The dive operations are directed by Sue Graves and include a full service dive shop with two instructors and two divemasters, compressors, tanks and the necessary rental gear to accommodate a full house of divers. The dive boat is a 34 foot Ensign deep-V powered by diesel and set up for diver comfort with a walk-through transom, platform at sea level, tank racks, freshwater camera rinse and even subtle niceties such as fresh towels. The fishing is world class at Walker's and the resort bustles with fishing activity in the summer, especially at tournament time. The same proliferation of marine life that attracts anglers has made Walker's Cay popular with divers for many years.

Most of the dive sites are within 15 minutes of the marina and are in the 35 to 60

foot depth range. There are huge high profile coral heads, caverns, caves and surge channels and there is also a deep-reef at 90 to 100 feet.

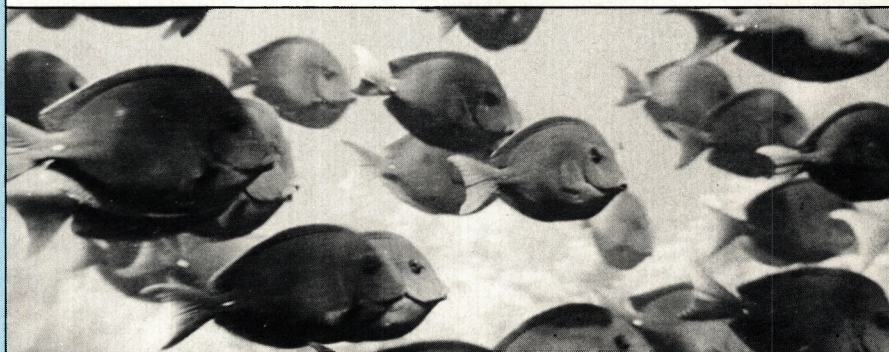
Queen's II is an example of one of these medium reefs, with a mini-wall dropping from 35 to 60 feet and the primary coral concentrations of elkhorn, brain and star. Here some pelagic activity is possible with jacks, yellowfin tuna and turtles cruising by, but the rays, reef tropicals and resident school of ballyhoo are more certain observations. We also made several dives on a site called **White Hole** to document the handfed grouper and rock hind. Sue Graves and Walker's Cay sales director Cheryl Kirz set up a regular underwater circus with dozens of tame fish eagerly competing for the conch tidbits offered.

Divers visiting Marsh Harbour will likely be served by DIVE ABACO under the direction of long time Bahamas dive veteran Skeet LaChance. Skeet has been in the Bahamas dive business since 1960, for the past eight years working from his base at Marsh Harbour Marina. The dive boat is a 30 foot Island Hopper, customized for diver convenience with tank racks, a comfortably stable dive platform with extended ladders and a unique stern tank support system to assist divers on and off with their gear. This part of the Abacos features shallow to medium depth reefs, high profile corals, canyons, swim-through caves and grottoes and, of course, friendly, approachable marine life. I say "of course" because handfeeding groupers and eels has become a Skeet LaChance trademark over the past 27 years. His sensitivity and rapport with marine life is refreshing and inspiring.

At Boat Harbour Marina, Marsh Harbour, there is a new operation under the direction of Jim and Carol Beights, formerly dive concessionaires at Treasure Cay. GREAT ABACO DIVE AND PHOTO CENTER will utilize two 30 foot deisel powered Island Hoppers, the *Treasure Seeker* and the *John B.*, for diver transport and will specialize in dive lodging packages with the Great Abaco Beach Hotel. Two compressors and a full line of scuba rental gear are available as well as an extensive line of underwater photography equipment. The Sony 8mm video system and Nikonos V with SB103 strobes are available for daily rental. One hour C-41 processing is projected to be available by spring.

On Green Turtle Cay, the Green Turtle Club and Marina hosts BRENDA'S DIVE SHOP LTD., owned and operated by Brendal Stevens. The Green Turtle Club is a relaxed and scenic property with 31 suites and villas, a freshwater lap pool, restaurant, lounge and marina to serve the fishing and diving interests of its clientele. Brendal's Dive Shop is at dockside with a small retail store, compressor, rental gear and dive boat. This latter is a 29 foot aluminum pontoon flatpaw pow-

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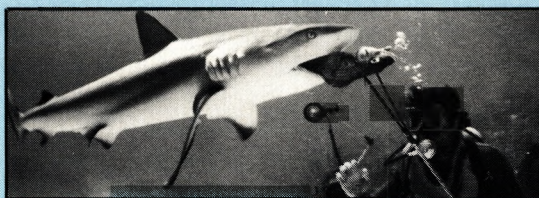
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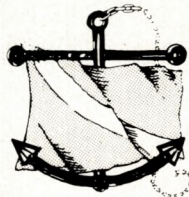
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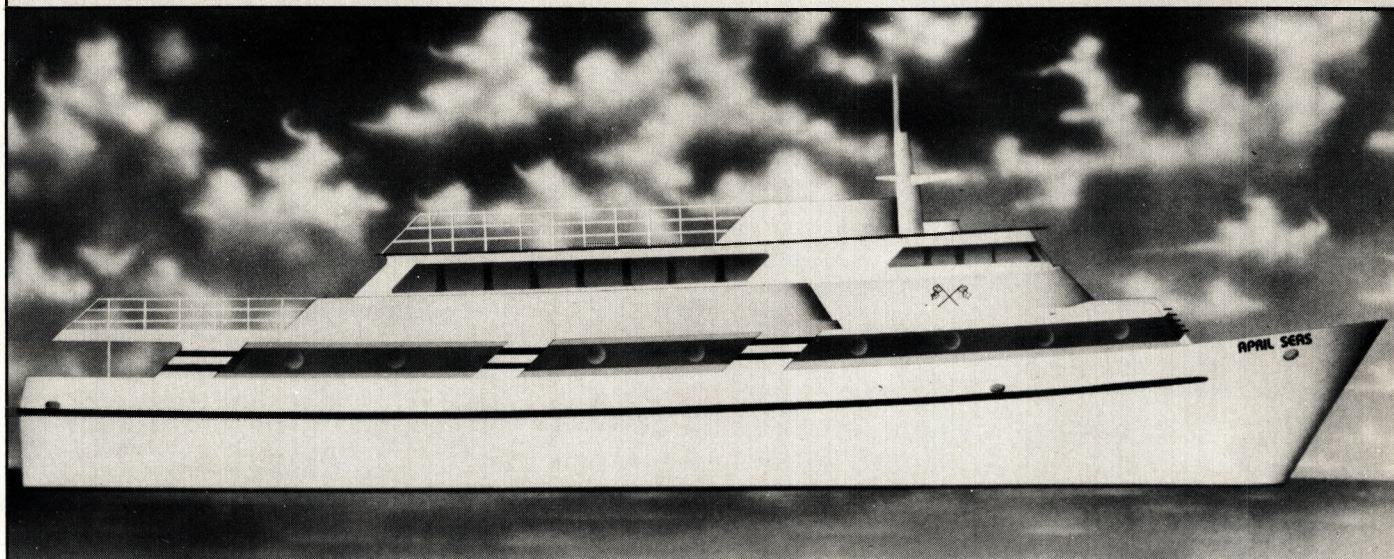
Underwater treats in the Bahamas include colorful marine life on shallow reefs. Historical wrecks and vessels purposely sunk to create artificial reefs add their own touch of excitement. Despite their proximity to the U.S., the islands of the Bahamas offer total tropical ambiance, including sunsets on palm-outlined beaches. Among the methods of travel in these islands are shuttle flights aboard Chalk's seaplanes.

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The Green Turtle dive profile includes shallow reefs, caverns, caves and a few quite interesting historical shipwrecks. One of my favorite sites in the area is the **Tarpon Dive**. Here, it is possible to predictably encounter a school of 11 tarpon, five to six feet long, in a coral canyon 40 feet down. Mr. T, the green moray so named because of a T-shaped scar on its head, is another regular. The **San Jacinto** wreck is the southernmost dive accessible from Green Turtle Cay and one of my favorite dives out of Treasure Cay as well. Here the first U.S. built steamship ran aground in 1865. While little remains but scattered wreckage, hull plating and the boilers, the marine life is tremendous and the handfeeding of Pickles and Pepper, the green morays, is exciting.

LIVE-ABOARDS

The fleet of dive boats based along the Florida coast and within the Bahamas gets more plush, more professional and more impressive with each passing year. This year several new vessels have joined the fleet and major improvements have been added to the others. The advantage to live-aboard dive cruising is, of course, much greater range than is possible from a hotel base; more dives per day; and greater dive convenience since your floating hotel is parked over the dive site.

This fall we had the pleasure of joining a cruise aboard the 90 foot *Sea Fever*. Owned and operated by Captain Tom Guarino, the *Sea Fever* departs Miami Beach for five day cruises to the Victories and Cat Cay, the Berry Islands, Cay Sal and Joulter Cays. She is a swift (20 knot), safe, aluminum hulled dive boat. *Sea Fever* began life working the oil fields in the Gulf of Mexico and she owes her speed and stability to that intent. Since Captain Guarino has reworked her from the bilge up for diver convenience, she is superbly suited to her new incarnation. She is fully air-conditioned with two compressors, two generators, 2,000 gallons of fresh water, a spacious and logical dive deck with tank racks and guest gear storage, comfortable dive platform and ladders, and stereo and video. The underwater video programs aboard *Sea Fever* are steadily expanding owing to Captain Guarino's interest in video and the increasing demand from his clientele. To that end there are several monitors, color enhancers, editing consoles, playback decks and video cameras and housings aboard. Twenty-two divers may be accommodated aboard *Sea Fever* in three double cabins in a four, five and six pas-

senger configuration.

The *Bottom Time II* is one of the new dive boats working the Bahamas from a Ft. Lauderdale base. A high speed catamaran, the *Bottom Time II* is 86 feet long and 30 feet wide, which gives the vessel exceptional stability both underway and at anchor. Powered by two 800 horsepower Rolls Royce diesels, she is fully air-conditioned (including individual units in each of the 15 staterooms) and carries

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two 22 cfm compressors, two huge sun-decks, a massive aft dive deck and platform, stereo, video and state-of-the-art electronics and navigational aids. Ten of the cabins have twin bunks and five offer double beds; each has a lavatory and hanging vanity with outside portholes. All accommodations are above the water line, which eliminates any annoyance from water slapping against the hull. The cruising concept of the *Bottom Time II* and Captain A.J. Bland is to have the vessel based in Ft. Lauderdale but schedule trip originations in various parts of the Bahamas so one cruise might feature the Victories and Cat Cay, while others might tour Grand Bahama, the Berry Islands, the Exumas, Cay Sal or even the Dry Tortugas. E-6 film processing will be added

this year and the *Bottom Time*, the 65 foot vessel that preceded *Bottom Time II*, is still available for dive charter.

Blackbeard's Cruises is one of the most popular live-aboard diving services in the Bahamas. Operated by Bruce and Peggy Purdy, Blackbeard's fleet sails from Miami and consists of three 65 foot sailboats. The *Morning Star*, *Sea Explorer* and *Pirate's Lady* are similarly constructed fiberglass sloops with diesel power for becalmed conditions. Each carries an ample crew of eight to cater to the diver's needs during the standard seven day, six night cruises. These cruises are set up as all-inclusive tours, with unlimited diving, food and even drinks. The Blackbeard's fleet is able to accommodate 28 passengers on each vessel, but to assure diver comfort no more than 22 are typically carried. The pace on the Blackbeard's cruise is relaxed, there is plenty of time for diving, and it is even possible to learn a little (or a lot) about sailing.

The R/V *Sea Dragon* is a 65 foot custom live-aboard that enjoys a very loyal repeat following. Since it is based in Nassau, the Exumas are quite accessible and the cruise will offer unlimited diving with an on board compressor and accommodations in four double staterooms.

The M/V *Island Fantasy* has established a reputation for superior service and fine dining in addition to providing access to the superior diving of a Grand Bahama offshore itinerary. Based in Riviera Beach, the *Island Fantasy* has eight double staterooms, twin 871 GM diesels, 24 hour air-conditioning and electrical service (110 volts, 60 cycles), a 30 cfm compressor, water maker, full navigational electronics and radio communications, and three color televisions equipped with VCRs. The *Island Fantasy* cruise is intended to pamper you.

The newest addition to the Bahamas dive fleet is expected to be operational as this issue hits the newstands. The *April Seas* is a 135 foot luxury dive vessel that will be based just three miles from the Ft. Lauderdale airport. She will have 13 double staterooms on the main deck and three suites below, for a total accommodation capacity of 32. The *April Seas* is intended as a vessel of extreme luxury and will be powered by twin 1,350 horsepower GM turbo diesels. She will be fully air-conditioned and also function as a day dive boat.

For further information regarding Bahamas dive packages, please contact the individual resort or dive operator, or call the Bahamas Office of Sports Information at (800) 32-SPORT or (305) 442-4867. Mail inquiries may be addressed to 255 Alhambra Circle, Suite 415, Coral Gables, Florida 33134. The Bahamas Reservation Service at (800) 327-0787 can further assist with information regarding room availability throughout the islands, transportation and other general travel questions. 

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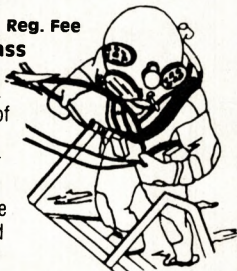
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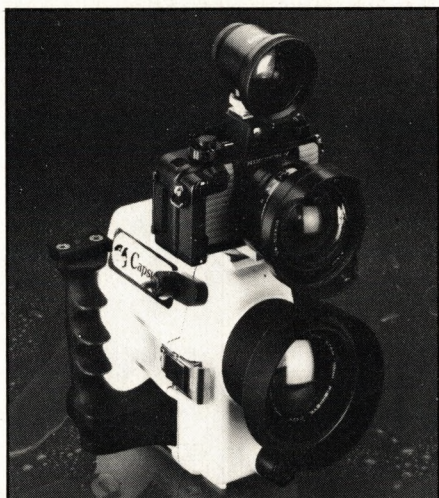
(Continued from Page 18)

inches taller by being pulled out of a hardhat outfit in a few seconds before entering the chamber.

An interesting paper was presented by the diving physiologists at the Saitama (Japan) Medical School. These scientists devised a small electronic unit that records the depth profile of a scuba diver from the time he enters the water until the end of the dive. By monitoring the dive profile continuously, they could examine it during sport or working dives. They found that our usual depth gauge and watch do not provide the proper data on profiles, because in sport diving, there are many excursions that cannot be documented by these instruments. Their device connects to a personal computer that can display the dive profile, be printed out and stored permanently in the computer. This is the ultimate dive log. Although the device is currently a research tool, it is likely, with advances in electronics, that we will one day carry such a depth/time recorder, which will also contain a decompression meter. The data from it will be transferred to a topside computer for logging your dive.

Karl Huggins, inventor of the Edge dive computer, provided us with interesting information on the first several years of experience with the instrument. He pointed out the flexibility a computer provides in multilevel diving. From remarks of several other participants, it was obvious the most useful application of the computer was in single dives with varying levels of depth, or where two dives are performed. More than two dives, or deep long dives, may cause the meter to underestimate decompression.

There were several papers that provided data on adaptation to decompression sickness. These studies were done on tunnel workers who compress and decompress daily to work in pressurized tunnel construction. They often begin a project with a seven percent incidence of decompression sickness (usually the mild limb bend type), then the incidence falls to about two percent over the first two to three days of exposure. There also seem to be certain persons who are susceptible to decompression sickness and they will develop symptoms of the disease when other people—with the same dive profiles—do not. This indicates divers may be more prone to decompression sickness at the beginning of a trip and should plan on being very conservative then. Deep dives should be done two to three days after steady diving or risk of decompression sickness may be higher. Factors that seem to increase incidence of decompression sickness include age, obesity, water temperature, individual susceptibility and acclimatization. X



THE CAPSULE "8" houses Sony's State-Of-The-Art 8 mm "Handycam". It is without a doubt the most compact and lightweight underwater video system available today, from which superior results can be obtained with a minimum amount of instruction and experience.

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TOPSIDE PHOTO CONTEST

Ocean Expo Productions will present the 1987 International Photography Contest in conjunction with Oceans Miami Month and the Ocean Expo '87 Film Festival held at Planet Ocean in Miami, Florida April 4-5.

The contest judges are Bill Held, Steve Lucas and Burton McNeely. First place gets a prize and a plaque with second and third receiving prizes and ribbons.

Entries must be received by March 10. For an official entry form and rules, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (or international postal coupon for foreign requests) to: Ocean Expo Productions, 1141 NE 142nd Street, North Miami, Florida 33161. ✉

AQUASPORT

(Continued from Page 44)

the boat before it is put into storage.

Fishermen will really appreciate the 86 quart insulated fish box beneath the passenger seat (it's also great for ice and drinks), two rod holders and a recirculating baitwell. Divers and swimmers will appreciate the freshwater shower nozzle, which can be used to wash the salt off before the ride home, as well as the below seat storage for hiding dive equipment or items that need to stay dry.

The console comes equipped with a stainless steel wheel with hydraulic steering, Ritchie compass, fuel gauge, tachometer, temperature/water pressure



gauge, voltmeter, trim indicator, complete instrument panel and more. The windshield, which folds across the center to completely shield the passengers in the aft section, is made of tinted safety glass and comes equipped with windshield wipers as well.

On the list of options available, a few really are musts for divers. The first is the Step-On dive platform. Of all the swim ladder assemblies we have seen, this one takes the prize. The sun top will also be very useful. You should also have your dealer install tank racks along the sides of the boat both forward and aft for better balance.

As described, less the outboard motor and options, the Sandpiper 222 carries a retail price tag of \$16,298. For the name of an Aquasport dealer near you, contact Aquasport, Inc., 7925 West 2nd Court, Hialeah, FL 33014. ✉



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Alan Baskin's
AQUATIC CENTRES
Tortola - British Virgin Islands

SDM travel

SECTION

Go ahead: Attempt to concentrate on the orange cup coral lining the wreck's interior. Ignore the eight inch coney gliding under your chin as you focus on the red sponge encrusting the gearbox housing. Sure, the bait-fish are milling outside the cargo room, but did you look across the sand recently—out past the wreck midsection, near the condenser? That's not a mini-sub. That's a 300 pound jewfish!

Oh yes, just another day on the wreck of the RMS *Rhone*, undoubtedly the most famous dive site in the British Virgin Islands. But, the BVI abounds with other great wrecks, reefs and drop-offs. The topside world is just as glorious. The temperatures vary from the low 70s(°F) in winter to the mid-80s in the summer. Trade winds caress the mountainous islands. On Tortola, the steep hillsides reach up to 1,780 feet above sea level. The island, which covers just 21 square miles, is home to 9,000 people. They're proud of their British heritage and customs. Although there may be a United States National Football League game on the big-screen TV at the hotel, there's often a bigger crowd at Road Town's soccer field.

When Alan Baskin and Eva Cope decided to move their home and business off the island of Haiti, they listed their fundamental criteria for their new home. The area had to have: (1) excellent and highly varied diving, (2) favorable climate, (3) lots of topside activities, (4) natural tropical beauty and—by no means of least importance—(5) warm and friendly people. Just as they began their search, they received news that the Aquatic Centres, one of the best known dive operations of the BVI, might become available. That event, followed by



AQUATIC CENTRES

Baskin In The Sun In The BVI

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY MARK M. LAWRENCE

what Alan and Eva refer to as a series of miracles, culminated in their permanent move to Tortola.

From their experiences in running dive operations on several other Caribbean Islands, and from their own uniquely charming personalities, Alan and Eva bring to Tortola some fresh ideas. Their net bag system was a big hit on Haiti. Upon checking into one of the two Aquatic Centres facilities, newly arriving guests receive mesh bags with their names on them. At the end of the day's diving, visitors put their personal dive gear into their own bags. The divemasters collect all the gear, rinse and store it for the night. When the divers return the next morning, their equipment has already been loaded onto their dive boat. As Alan Baskin put it, "Our guests' only responsibility is to remember to put the dust caps on their regulators. We take care of the rest."

Aquatic Centres, a division of Ba-



From top left: Road Town, Tortola, BVI; orange filefish; Eastern Airlines 757; Odile Long and Eleanor Klein with a large wrench on the *Rhone* wreck.

skin in the Sun, maintains two facilities on Tortola. One is at the Prospect Reef Resort marina and the other is just below the Treasure Isle Hotel. These two facilities can easily handle the vacationing diver's rental or repair needs. Whether you want to look good in a pair of designer sunglasses or take a good look at various types of dive equipment, the shelves of the Aquatic Centres are well stocked.

Rainbow Visions adjoins the Aquatic Centres store at Prospect Reef. Jim Scheiner and Odile Long run this full

travel

service video and photographic facility. They offer much more than just the normal E-6 processing and photographic sales and rental. Because Jim and Odile have been photographing and diving in the Virgin Islands for years, they have accumulated not only a great collection of images and video footage, but have also learned how to find special fish and critters and where to go to turn a ho-hum photograph into something special. For the experienced visiting photographer, touring underwater with this pair is a pleasure. And, if you have never used a camera they'll be glad to show you how easy underwater photography can be with a Nikonos automatic TTL strobe system or a compact Sony 8mm video camera. If you prefer playing in front of the camera, then go diving with Jim in the morning and he'll have a professionally prepared tape of you—ready for your VCR—that evening.

Aquatic Centres currently operates three charter vessels; a fourth boat is on the drawing boards. Word of mouth works. Alan and Eva receive more student referrals and intros to scuba each year. They've designated their 26 foot dive boat, *Wet Delight*, to be used primarily for beginning divers. On board the 30 foot *Apache* there's plenty of room for photo equipment and dive gear as well as an area sheltered from the tropical sun. Slightly larger groups may find themselves commandeering the 36 foot *Tejas*. Each boat carries coolers of sodas and fresh water. There's always room to keep a picnic lunch chilled. Most dive sites lie across the Sir Francis Drake Channel. The Aquatic Centres vessels make these runs comfortably and quickly.

Without good crews, dive boats are just hulls. Aquatic Centres has some great divemasters. Like Alan and Eva, the divemasters take the time to get to know their guests. During the ride between sites, the divemasters may explain the origin of an island's name such as Salt Island and Dead Chest or recount, with slight embellishment, the local history. All the guides gave informative briefings; their talks reveal their firsthand knowledge of the local reef inhabitants. Underwater, each divemaster uses a slate and grease pencil to help identify interesting marine fau-

na. On several dives, such as Painted Walls, the guides carry Mini-Suns. These bright lights bring out the true underwater colors. With the flick of a switch they turn a rock wall into a multicolored painting.

Aquatic Centres works closely with several BVI hotels. Each has its own special character. Prospect Reef Resort makes life for the traveling diver easy and varied. All of the 131 rooms have kitchenettes. Rooms range from standard to deluxe villas. Conference facilities are available. When not diving, check out the tennis courts or pitch and putt course. There are three pools. The shops include laundry, hair salon and the gourmet grocery, Little Circle. Little Circle even has the daily

AQUATIC CENTRES

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New York Times. You can work off all the good food from the two restaurants and beach bar at the hotel gym. Prospect will gladly arrange deepsea fishing, island tours and car rentals.

Aquatic Centres' other facility is at the Treasure Isle Marina. Their 40 rooms line the hillside above the Road Town harbor. From the Spy Glass Bar, you can look out across the pool to the mouth of the harbor. From the driveway you can look into the pool and watch the Aquatic Centres' scuba classes through the viewing ports. The hotel works with several boats in the area, which provide day sails and island trips. Treasure Isle Hotel has its own sailing school. In cooperation with the Aquatic Centres, Treasure Isle offers a traditional diving/hotel package and its own Ironman Course. In one eight day vacation, energetic guests can learn the basics of sailing and earn their scuba certification. If that's not enough, you can burn up the tennis courts, too.

Alan and Eva also designed a special package with the Morgans' Sugar Mill Hotel. Built around an old plantation, the grounds of the Sugar Mill

stretch from beach to hillside. Jeff and Jinx Morgan maintain close contact with all their guests. Here the emphasis is on relaxation and fine food. Guests can enroll in week long cooking classes or the new Dive and Dine vacation. Between Jeff and Jinx spoiling the divers with exquisite food and Alan and Eva pampering the divers with great reefs, this trip can certainly live up to its billing as the underwater gourmet's perfect holiday.

Peter Island is an exclusive island retreat where pride is taken in "doing nothing extraordinarily well." The idea of "nothing" is sailing, windsurfing, fishing, tennis and horseback riding. On the beach at Deadman Bay, guests soak up the sun, read and lounge under the palms. The service at Peter Island is excellent. Aquatic Centres dive boats regularly greet guests at the hotel's private marina.

Long Bay Hotel sits on one of Tortola's most famous beaches. Rooms range from standard to oceanside cottages. Between the stilts upon which the cottages stand are hammocks, which are great for after dive naps. In addition to a swimming pool and tennis court, the hotel has a nine hole pitch and putt golf course.

Diving the RMS *Rhone* always gets top billing in the BVI. Part of the ship lies in 60 to 80 feet of water and the stern reaches within 20 feet of the surface. This arrangement lends itself to a two dive tour. Although no one can guarantee you'll meet an enormous grouper on every dive, a good time is a sure bet. As Earl Weaver of Diver Training Center in Plano, Texas, said, "I've been diving for 26 years and the *Rhone* is always fantastic."

The wreck of the *Chikuzen* sits in the middle of sand flats. Rising from the sand at 80 feet, the ship reaches to within 40 feet of the surface. With nothing else around, the 280 foot hull has become an oasis for marine life. Large schools of barracuda, jack and even pompano frequent the wreck. Rays hide in the sand. Because the *Chikuzen* is in the open Atlantic, where seas and currents are variable, this exciting dive is for experienced divers only.

Everyone should visit Painted Walls. Depths are 50 feet and less. Rocky canyons lead the diver around to a sponge encrusted tunnel. When the divemasters illuminate the walls with their lights, the reef sparkles with color. The reef drops from 20 to 60 feet at Blonde Rocks. Look for sleeping nurse sharks under the ledges. Like

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AQUATIC CENTRES

many spots in the BVI, the undercuts are covered with brightly colored sponges. Deepwater gorgonians grow on the overhanging main ledge.

West of Norman Island stand the four Indians. These rocks rise far above the sea from the bottom at 50 feet. The Indians have a great variety of hard and soft corals. Norman Island features caves that are great for snorkeling and shallow diving. Usually dense schools of fry hide from predators here. Visibility in the BVI averages between 60 and 80 feet. Clarity in excess of 100 feet is not rare.

Alan and Eva still run their usual two tank morning and single tank afternoon trips, but they have developed a new way to enjoy the British Virgin Islands. Rather than rush the diving day, they plan to extend the two tank trip by allowing time for a surface adventure. It works like this: Play on Blonde Rocks for your first dive. Zip over to Cooper Island for the surface interval. Cooper Island has a great beach and a restaurant. Perhaps you would like to munch on shrimp tempura or veal Marsala under the palm trees. Painted Walls would be a great second dive. Another

day you may start by diving Angelfish Reef, picnic and snorkel the caves on Norman Island and visit the Indians in the afternoon. This leisurely approach to diving lets visitors experience all the delights of the British Virgin Islands.

That is the way Alan and Eva think. Guests shouldn't have to work or rush, but they should love the service and the diving. Visitors who come and sample Aquatic Centres' easy diving return again and again. Texas diver Arthur Rhea concisely expressed his group's unanimous impression of their week with the Aquatic Centres, when he smiled and stated, "It was great!"

Travel to the British Virgin Islands is easy. Major airlines such as Eastern fly from Miami and New York daily to San Juan. From San Juan many commuter airlines such as Eastern Metro hop over to the BVI. Most flights land on Beef Island, the little island that adjoins Tortola. There are also frequent ferries from St. Thomas in the United States Virgin Islands. Whatever your preferred mode of travel, by air or sea, it doesn't take long to get to the BVI. ✈

CAYMAN SIXGILL

One thousand feet underwater, off the west wall of Grand Cayman, an exciting discovery was made recently. Dr. Eugenie Clark of the University of Maryland, and National Geographic photogra-

pher, Emory Kristof, spotted an eight foot, immature female sixgill shark through the front viewport of RSL's *PC 1802* Perry submersible. According to Dr. Clark, "This is the southernmost sighting of these little known deepwater sharks. Perhaps the supreme predator of the deep (their habitat ranges from as shallow as 1,000 feet on the darkest nights of the lunar cycle to depths of 4,000-6,000 feet), the sixgills are primitive cousins of the better known species that account for most of the sharks in the Caribbean and worldwide."

Grand Cayman is a perfect location to continue deepwater research using submersibles. Dr. Clark has already booked submersible time for RSL's *PC 1802* and the 1,000 meter capability submarine, *Pisces 2*. The sixgill sharks will be the focus of study during these research dives. Longer dives, 36-40 hours, are being planned. Again, the sixgill shark will be the central part of this study. Additionally, however, National Geographic hopes to generate enough data to write a feature article on the whole Cayman wall to a depth of 3,000 feet.

Research Submersibles Ltd. offers anyone the opportunity to explore Cayman's wall and the wonders of the deep ocean realm to depths of 800 feet with professional pilots in one of two research submarines operating daily from Georgetown, Grand Cayman. ✈

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GALAPAGOS STUDY

The Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution research vessel *Seward Johnson* recently visited the Galapagos Islands, carrying a four man sub and Harbor Branch/SeaPharm Project researchers seeking to discover new drugs from marine organisms.

These scientists were working, in part, on a contract recently awarded SeaPharm by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). SeaPharm collected deepwater specimens that will be provided to NCI in Washington for evaluation in its antitumor test systems.

Utilizing scuba and the deep diving Harbor Branch submersible, Johnson-Sea-Link I, the Harbor Branch/SeaPharm scientists and their research assistants were hoping to discover new chemicals that will act against such human disorders as cancer, viral infections, fungal disease and disorders of the immune system. In the search for such cures, land organisms have already been extensively evaluated, while the oceans offer a vast reservoir of untapped resources. This type of research is quickly coming of age as underwater technology increases.

Johnson-Sea-Link I, equipped with underwater video and still cameras, manipulator arms and suction type sampling devices, is certified to carry a pilot and three others as deep as 2,640 feet be-

neath the surface. Two unmanned subs, or remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), were also used on the mission. The Harbor Branch developed CORD (Cabled Observation and Rescue Device) is capable of operating, for indefinite periods of time, to a depth of 3,000 feet. A smaller robot called Minirover accompanied scuba divers, monitoring safety and photographing the proceedings.

The Galapagos Islands were selected by the scientists as targets for shallow water collections because the area has a unique marine environment, a diversity of unique species and an abundance of marine life that has been little explored as a source for drugs. 

NAUI COLLEGE

With recently concluded instructor training courses in Texas, Mexico, Korea and Europe, international and domestic instructional opportunities through NAUI College continue to expand. Offering the same training curriculum as can be taken on-site in Southern California, the extension course ITC has seen rapid development in the past year. The course is designed for NAUI divemasters and assistant instructors who want to earn their certifications in a unique diving environment and/or location closer to home.

A full schedule is now available for 1987 and can be found in the latest NAUI College brochure, which can be ordered

by calling (800) 423-7095 toll free or (800) 227-6663 toll free in California—or by writing the college offices at 27402 Camino Capistrano, Suite 103, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677.

NAUI College has stepped up its efforts to help its graduates who register with its placement office. In addition to providing resume and cover letter development as well as personal counseling, the school's office will now be automatically presenting its candidates to all NAUI pro facilities on a regular basis. The college offers a variety of other post graduate services to its students as well. 

NC TRIPS

Rod's Charters, offering diving expeditions to shipwrecks in the graveyard of the Atlantic, begins its seventh season this year. The trips, guided by Rod Farb—author, photographer and authority on North Carolina shipwreck diving—will visit more than 30 of the best shipwrecks off the North Carolina coast this season.

One of the East Coast's finest wreck diving areas, the graveyard's shipwrecks are bathed by the warm, clear tropical waters of the Gulf Stream and provide excellent diving for photographers, naturalists and artifact collectors.

For more information contact Rod's Charters, Rt. 1, Box 48AB, Cedar Grove, NC 27231; (919) 732-3934. 

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Three night package **\$219.00*** per person double occupancy
Seven night package **\$529.00*** per person double occupancy

*Prices do not include the 10% service charge and 6% government tax which will be quoted at the time of booking.



Top: Janice Lucas with yellowtail snappers at the wreck of the *Oro Verde*. **Above:** Four of the dive boats in Don Foster's fleet. **Below:** Janice pets the tame grouper, Elizabeth, at Aquarium. **Opposite page:** Don Foster's beautiful Chris Craft yacht *Wavemaker* is available for cruising charter (no diving).



OK. A show of hands please. How many of you like hotels? C'mon, be honest. Well, I'm not crazy about them. Now, please don't misunderstand, I love traveling to almost any far off dive resort. You see, it's not that I dislike the places I stay at any of the most popular islands, it's just that I'm not crazy about hotels. There just never seems to be enough living space, or privacy, for that matter. You know the feeling. One big room filled to capacity with a couple of beds, a dresser, perhaps a table and a few chairs. When you add to that all the diving gear it takes for two people (heaven help you if there are four), the suitcases, camera cases, dive bags and the accumulated build-up of a week's souvenirs, suddenly there is hardly enough room to turn around without tripping over something!

Space: That's what I crave—space—and all the amenities, too. Well, let me let you in on a little secret. Every year hundreds of people escape small rooms by staying at Grand Cayman's Hospitality World. They've got the space. Lots of space and extras: one, two or three bedrooms—enough for everyone—and each with a separate bath. (Oh, bravo to the architects!) Then there are full kitchens with real refrigerators, some with icemakers, ranges, sinks for soaking cameras (you can wash dishes in them, too, if you really want), living rooms with real couches and

rocking chairs, dining rooms with real tables, thick carpeting, air-conditioning, patios, a pool and a beach! Don't forget the beach. And, when was the last time you could sit down and watch American TV at a Caribbean hotel? Well, they've got satellite dishes down here!

I bet you're thinking it's expensive, huh? Nope, not at all. In fact, it costs little more to stay in one of these apartments than any deluxe room at Cayman's better hotels. In fact, if friends or groups share an apartment the cost will probably be less than the hotels. So how does Hospitality World do it? Simple: Marc Redt, general manager and president of the Cayman Islands Hotel Association, has taken his more than 20 years of hotel management experience and applied it toward providing the best condominiums on the island by the day, week or month.

With more than 250 privately owned units in his rental pool, Marc has selected some of the most beautifully furnished and lavishly landscaped and brought them under his company's management. When you walk in the door of one of Hospitality World's condominiums you'll feel like you just came back to your very own gorgeous island home. There is one major exception: You get virtually all the same services, except on-premises food

service, that you'd expect at any top resort hotel. All come with many—some even more—of the same amenities you want including that lovely accessory known as the maid.

With Hospitality World you can return time after time to the same complex, or choose a different one for each trip and expect the same high quality service from the same management team. Instead of only one location you can select from any of ten, depending on your preferences. If you know Grand Cayman, the choices will be easy since most are among the best on the island. All but one are right on the beach. Some are close to George Town and the commercial district, one is near the north wall, and most have grocery stores and a wide selection of Cayman's best restaurants nearby. Some restaurants will even deliver to your door so you can eat in without cooking.

So, you ask, the space sounds fabulous, but if I'm stuck in some tall condo building it has to be a hassle to do any diving. How do I get to the boat—rent a car? Well, you can if you want and rental costs are reasonable, plus, you can explore a lot more. Some Hospitality World packages even include the car, but it's only necessary at one property, some distance north of Seven Mile Beach. So, how about the diving? How is it done? Enter Don Foster's Dive Grand Cayman.

Marc Redt has teamed up with one of Cayman's most dynamic and fun loving dive couples, Don and Jil Foster. Their operation is one of the finest and smoothest running found in the Caribbean. SKIN DIVER Magazine's Paul Tzimoulis was heard recently to say that "Don Foster's name is to diving what Harvard's name is to universities." I'd say you can take that to mean they've got quality.

When the Fosters arrange the dive portion of your vacation you don't have to worry about anything. And, as for your having to haul dive gear up and down from the 76th floor of a condo, out to the car, down the street and out to the boat, you can forget that, too.

Managed by Allan Bloomrosen, Foster's operation makes dive logistics simple. In most cases, unless winds make it chancy, one of Don and Jil's custom built monohull flattops will pick you up directly on the beach in front of your condo. With either their brand new 54 foot, or one of the two new 52 foot custom boats, designed and built to Don's specifications, the captain nudges his bow up above the waterline, the mate/divemaster drops a ladder down to the sand and away you go. If you are traveling with a group, Allan can arrange for one of the two smaller flattops to accommodate you privately, depending on the number of people. When weather or location does not permit a beach pickup, he'll send out an air-

conditioned bus to ferry you to the boat.

On the way to the first morning site, one of the crew members will ready your gear if you like. In fact, they prefer to let you enjoy the ride while they prepare everything. But, if you insist, you can do it yourself. My motto? Why hurt their feelings? If they want to do it, let 'em do it!

The first dive is usually made at one of the exciting wall sites such as Trinity Caves, Eagle's Nest, Orange Canyon or Sand Chute. Following a surface interval, a second dive is made inshore on a reef such as Aquarium or one of Cayman's freighter wrecks, the *Oro Verde* or *Balboa*. If you want to get in as much diving as possible, you can also sign up for the afternoon single tank trip and one of the regularly scheduled night dives.

In addition to the five dive boats, Don and Jil also own a beautiful Chris Craft yacht, the *Wavemaker*, which is available for charter cruising. Don is, however, quite proud of the beautiful teak finish of his yacht and does not permit scuba tanks aboard.

If you do have an underwater photographer sharing your apartment, or are interested in polishing your own skills, the Fosters have established a full service underwater photo center at their main base of operations at the Royal Palms Hotel. Resident underwater photo pro Brad Graham gives daily underwater photo instruction or can provide photo buddy service to record your dives on film or videotape. You can also rent cameras, U/W video equipment, flash units, lenses or have your rolls of Ektachrome or Fujichrome developed overnight.

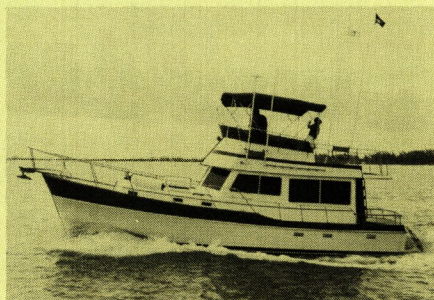
Reservations in the U.S. for Hospitality World and Don Foster's Dive Grand Cayman are made through Scuba Tours, Inc. A full service travel company, Scuba Tours' staff members are highly experienced and knowledgeable about Grand Cayman diving and will gladly arrange everything including your Cayman Airways tickets. They know the various Hospitality World condominium complexes and can answer your questions intelligently. By the way, don't be afraid to ask. It's the only way to get exactly the accommodations you want. They are all different and not all have the same furnishings or amenities. One is a bit remote (but worth the drive) and one is away from the beach, so tell them just what you expect. They'll also be glad to work out special rates for groups. Call toll free (800) 526-1394; in New Jersey (201) 256-9115. In Grand Cayman contact Don Foster's Dive Grand Cayman Ltd., P.O. Box 151, Grand Cayman, BWI; (809) 949-7025.

The next time you find yourself off somewhere in an undersized hotel room, don't blame me. Hospitality World and Don Foster's have got your space reserved right now. Just call them. 

CAYMAN CONDO CAPER

Spacious Digs And Grand Diving

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEVE LUCAS



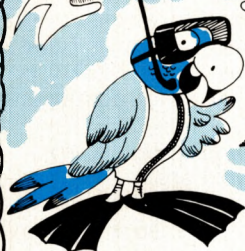


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COME ON DOWN

PACIFIC NOMAD/FIJI

See & Sea Travel of San Francisco will host unlimited diving cruises to Fiji's Great Sea Reef aboard the 100 foot *Pacific Nomad*. This vessel can accommo-



date up to 18 divers. It is air-conditioned and has a beautiful native-craft interior.

The Great Sea Reef runs westward from the island of Vanua Levu. It is 50 miles of coral battlements dropping off to 6,000 foot depths.

For further information contact See & Sea Travel, 50 Francisco St., Suite 205, San Francisco, CA 94133; (800) DIV-XPRT or (415) 434-3400.

GUANAJA SEMINARS

Posada del Sol will present four one week historical seminars on the history of Columbus' fourth voyage, his landing on Guanaja, Spanish buccaneers and pirates of the Caribbean, and how they used the Bay Islands as their stronghold to raid the Spanish Main.

The seminars will be conducted by Mendel Petersen, retired curator of marine archaeology at the Smithsonian Institution. Petersen is a Columbus scholar, expert on Spanish New World trade and author of several historical works including *Funnel of Gold*.

In addition to the lectures each day, activities will include: diving at the anchorage spot of Columbus' landing on Guanaja, a beach party at the landing site, a 16th century feast and a pirates of the Caribbean costume party.

The dates are April 26-May 2, May 2-9, September 13-20 and September 20-27.

Posada has established 25 permanent moorings on 58 dive sites. Two of the dive guides, Hector Andrade and Raul Santos, have completed their divemaster certification courses. Posada has sunk an 85 foot boat in 80 feet of water to provide additional wreck diving.

DAN DIVING ACCIDENT COURSE IN CAYMAN

The Divers Alert Network's ninth Diving Accident and HBO Treatment course will be held at the Holiday Inn, Grand Cayman, April 18-25. It includes the course in the mornings and two tank dives in the afternoons. It is designed for physicians and emergency room personnel, including paramedics and nurses. The aims are to provide the facts relevant to under-

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standing the management of diving accidents, especially those bearing on the basic physics and physiology and subsequent treatment methods available. The staff includes Dr. Peter B. Bennett, Dr. Joseph Farmer, Dr. Eric Kindwall and Dr. Giles Mebane.

This activity is approved for 24 credit hours, Category 1 by the American Medical Association; 2.4 CEU contact hours; 24 hours from the American Academy of Family Physicians; and approved credit from the American College of Emergency Physicians and the National Association of Diver Medical Technicians.

For Further details contact Cindi Easterling, M.Ed., Box 3108, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC 27710 or telephone (800) 222-9984, local (919) 684-6878 or 684-6485. 🐠

BEQA DIVERS

With the formation of Beqa Divers Fiji, Scubahire Limited has expanded its operations to Pacific Harbour International Resort on Fiji's Coral Coast.

The resort marina is just seven miles from Beqa Lagoon. Beqa Divers' head-



quarters includes a fully equipped dive shop and the company's brand new dive boat, the *Beqa Diver*. This is a 28 foot aluminum Divecat, powered by two 140 hp Volvo Penta inboard-outdrive engines, and is designed and built especially for scuba diving. The ultra-modern vessel has special eccentric hulls, the cushioning effect of which enable it to maintain a high speed in rough sea conditions without loss of comfort to the passengers.

Scubahire Limited is Fiji's only PADI franchised training facility. Visitors will be able to try out scuba diving with an introductory dive or go through a resort course. Courses up to assistant instructor will be offered at Pacific Harbour International Resort by Scubahire's PADI open water instructors.

Full dive shop facilities are available at Pacific Harbour, including sale of all scuba equipment at duty free prices. The new facility offers visitors the unique opportunity of exploring Beqa Lagoon by day and staying at a reasonably priced, international class resort by night.

For information contact Beqa Divers, G.P.O. Box 777, Suva, Fiji Islands. 🐠



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Whether you're a novice or pro diver.

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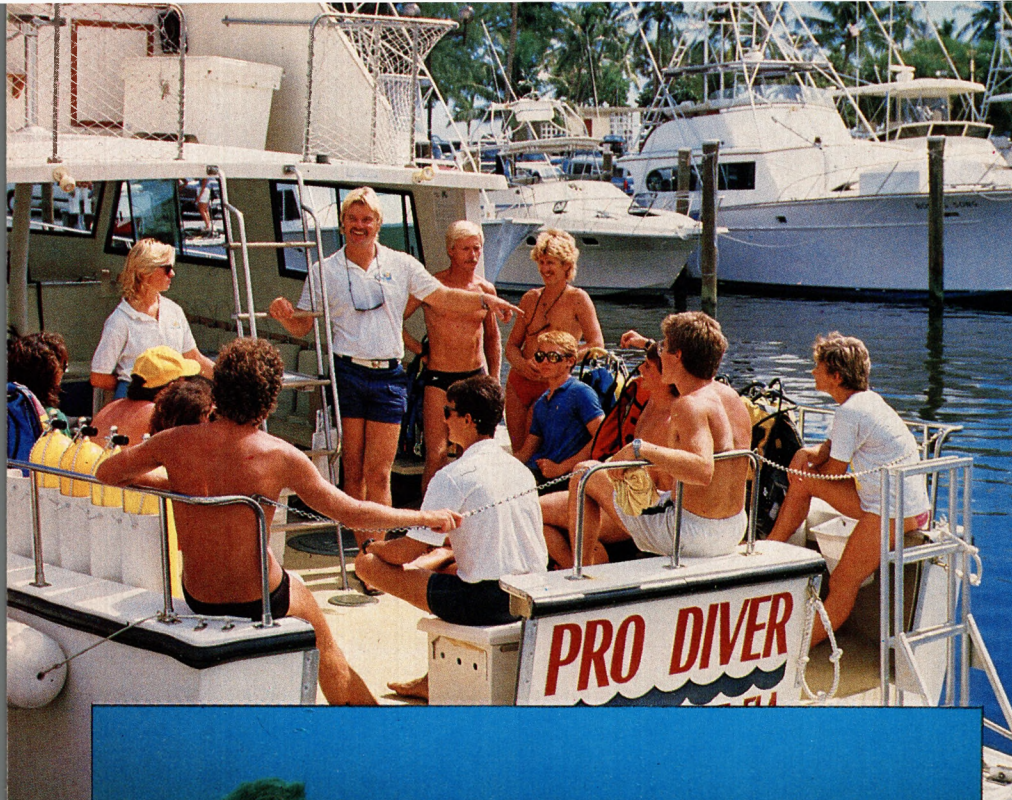


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Key Largo



PRO DIVE

Ft. Lauderdale's
Finest In Resort
And Educational
Diving

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK



Top: Captain Bill Cole gives a pre-departure briefing aboard the *Pro Diver*. **Above:** Divers cruise over the bow of the *Mercedes*. This wreck is just one of the ships sunk in this area to form artificial reefs. **Below:** Colonial hydroids on the wheelhouse of the *Mercedes*; Dana Becker and Loren Mackay inside the Pro Dive shop.



Having lived and dived in South Florida for the past nine years, I was anxious to sample the wrecks and reefs of Ft. Lauderdale. All I knew of the Ft. Lauderdale beneath the seas was the very positive word of mouth endorsements from other divers who had visited the wreck of the *Mercedes* or the *Rebel*, or who had spent time diving along the extensive system of coral reefs just offshore. I knew a little of the Ft. Lauderdale above the sea as we would often dine in one of the more than 200 restaurants, shop in one of the exclusive malls such as the Galleria or along Las Olas Boulevard, or just relax on the six mile expanse of magnificent wide, sandy beach.

Ft. Lauderdale is a metropolitan center of commerce and recreation perhaps best known for its annual migration of college students vacation-bound for the beach and night clubs, but Spring Break is but a tiny part of the Ft. Lauderdale tourism picture. Of greater importance are the family theme parks, beautiful golf and tennis facilities, 165 miles of waterways with intracoastal cruise boats, superb resort hotels, horse and dog racing, jai alai and, of course, complete services for the traveling diver.

Professional Diving Schools of Florida (Pro Dive) is a perfect complement to this diverse base of general tourism. Located for more than ten years at the Bahia Mar Yachting Center, Pro Dive is a combination of a resort dive facility, a sophisticated instruction and career development center, and a tasteful retail store. The Bahia Mar Yachting Center is a 40 acre marina and hotel retreat and the placement

of Pro Dive within this complex presents a wide range of activities conveniently close to Pro Dive guests.

Just five miles from the Ft. Lauderdale International Airport and directly adjacent to the heart of the beach, Bahia Mar consists of 350 boat slips; fuel dock; marina store; customs; charter boats for fishing and sailing; small power boat rentals; the *Jungle Queen* sightseeing boat; three restaurants; a lounge; and a top quality 300 room hotel, complete with heated swimming pool, color television and charming boutiques.

Professional Diving Schools of Florida is owned and operated by Greg and Loren Mackay, and was organized from the very outset in 1975 with a heavy emphasis toward scuba instruction. Today the instruction programs range from the introductory scuba experience (resort course) through the four day basic certification. They include such specialties as wreck diving, night diving, deep diving, search and recovery and underwater photography; and culminate in the rescue diver, divemaster and, ultimately instructor development programs.

This latter course is a complete preparation for the PADI instructor evaluation course. Pro Dive has been conducting instructor level training for more than three years. Course director Joe Angelo finds Pro Dive an especially productive base for this since so much hands-on experience is possible. Instructor candidates are able to work on the dive boat, assist lectures in all levels of training, assist in the pool and open water training dives, work in a retail center, function as underwater guides; in short, gain exposure to all facets of a scuba career apprenticeship. The PADI instructor program has the prerequisite of PADI divemaster, rescue and advanced diver certifications and requires 14 days for completion. Pro Dive

accepts enrollments at any time and considerable flexibility is permitted in establishing the course starting date.

Resort diving services have been integral to the Pro Dive concept since 1978 when it acquired its first U.S. Coast Guard certified multi-passenger dive boat. Today, customers are accommodated aboard the *Pro Diver*, a 42 foot fiberglass V-hull diesel dive boat superbly suited to day diving convenience. Although it is certified for as many as 40 divers, a normal load on the *Pro Diver* is rarely more than 24 and often less. There are tank racks and personal gear storage areas; head and freshwater showers; a stable dive platform with extended ladders; a unique padded camera box; sun and shaded deck areas; complete marine electronics, including Loran programmed to capacity with 50 dive sites; complimentary soft drinks; and a stereo integrated into the underwater diver recall system, just in case a group might wish to explore Nurse Shark Reef to the musical accompaniment of the *Jaws* theme.

The diving off Ft. Lauderdale confirmed the enthusiastic reports I had been hearing. The average underwater lateral visibility is in the 40 to 60 foot range, but days of 60 to 100 foot visibility are not uncommon on some of the deeper reefs and wrecks, particularly when an onshore wind pushes the Gulf Stream even closer. The dive sites are typically 20 to 30 minutes from the convenient Bahia Mar *Pro Diver* docks, and the boat is dry and comfortable en route.

The reefs of Ft. Lauderdale consist of three distinct types: shallow reefs in 10-20 feet, medium depth reefs in 20-40 feet and deep reefs, dropping from 45 to 90 feet. Most of the dives are done as drifts along the seaward face of the reef, although in some conditions the boat will remain at anchor. Actually, I found the

drift dives preferable since the current was gentle enough to permit me to stop to take underwater pictures without having to fight to stay in place, yet strong enough to propel us effortlessly. By drifting the reef, the diver is able to cover more territory. Pro Dive organizes individual groups of four divers, each with its own dive flag and float, so there is never a feeling of overcrowding. The only divers likely to be encountered underwater are those in each group.

The reefs offshore Ft. Lauderdale are an extension of the same system prevalent in the Florida Keys but, because of the steady currents, the filter feeders such as gorgonians and sponges may be more abundant. Ledges seem to exist at each reef profile and these are undercut, providing refuge for lobsters, nurse sharks and all manner of nocturnal marine life such as moray eels, bigeyes and squirrelfish. The complete range of Caribbean tropicals surrounds the exterior of these coral heads and, in fact, since the large clumps of coral are more sporadic, the fish tend to cling in huge quantities. Turtles are common at several of the Pro Dive secret spots and between the Loran coordinates and shore ranges there are scores of quality, novel dive sites featuring especially abundant marine life and dramatic coral concentrations.

Over the past few years the wrecks of Ft. Lauderdale have added an exciting new dimension to the diving portfolio. Steve Sommerville, the artificial reef coordinator for the Broward County Environmental Control Board, has been especially effective in acquiring derelict vessels to be sunk as artificial reefs. The most famous wreck of this incredibly successful program attracted national attention on November 23, 1984. Swept from her anchorage by a violent storm, she came to rest high on the beach, next to the swimming pool of the beachside mansion of Palm Beach socialite Mollie Wilmot. The *Mercedes I* sat stranded for 105 days as salvage specialists labored to restore Mollie's view. The *Mercedes* now lies in nearly 100 feet of water, perfectly upright and bow facing north (all the Ft. Lauderdale wrecks sunk as part of the artificial reef program have settled to the bottom upright and bow to the north—no easy feat). The wreck is only one mile offshore, within sight of the city's highrise hotels and beachfront.

On a clear day it is possible to view the *Mercedes* by snorkeling on the surface, but visibility on the wreck is variable. During our visit we had perhaps 40 feet, although repeat divers on the boat were reminiscing about the 100 foot plus days they had encountered over the summer. The marine life already inhabiting the *Mercedes* is amazing. As we descended, the first fish we saw were schooling am-

(Continued on Page 101)

Pro Diver docked at the Bahia Mar Yachting Center marina. Bahia Mar is a 40 acre hotel complex and Professional Diving Schools of Florida (Pro Dive) is located within it.



Australia The Wo

AIR QUEENSLAND TO LIZARD ISLAND.

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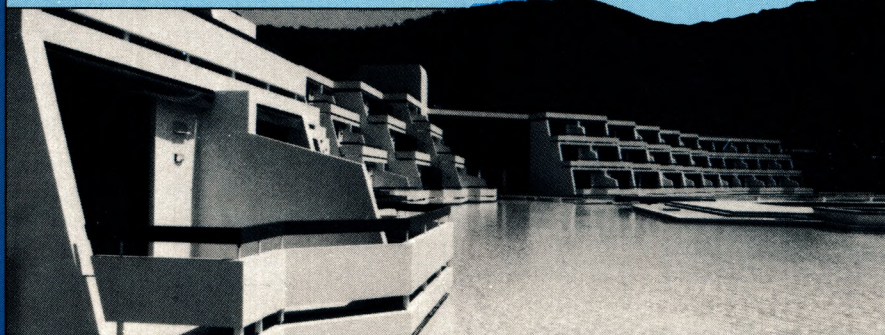
specialized dive boat. All dive equipment is available for rent. Lessons and full certification are available. This magnificent resort also offers countless beaches, fresh water pool, tennis court, light and heavy game fishing, sightseeing by glass-bottom boat, plus much more. For complete information on fares and travel, call (213) 381-3062 or (212) 697-3694.



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How do you improve on paradise? That's what the world will discover in late 1986 when Hayman Island Resort reopens after a \$AUS120 million reconstruction program. This complete holiday island on the Great Barrier Reef will offer superb accommodations for the whole family: complete air-conditioning, 24-hour room

service, 5 international class restaurants, water skiing, sailing, and nightly entertainment. A 25-knot dive boat offers fast daily access to Bait Reef and beyond. Hayman can be reached by Ansett Airlines jet to Hamilton Island, and transfer on the luxurious M.V. Sun Goddess. Call *Dive In Australia*, (415) 421-5588.



QUICKSILVER DAY TRIPS.

This high-speed catamaran out of Port Douglas provides the only day trip to the true outer reef for everyone – divers, swimmers, and even non-swimmers. Quicksilver offers two dives per day, learn-to-dive programs, sumptuous smorgasbord lunch, underwater observatory, and reef viewing tours in the unique Subsee Explorer. A wonderful way to enjoy great underwater sightseeing. Call *Dive In Australia*, (415) 421-5588.

SCHEHERAZADE.

For an exceptional diving vacation, sail aboard Peter Wright's beautiful Scheherazade – a fully powered 55-foot sailing cutter. From Cairns, this exquisite yacht carries up to six passengers to the Ribbon Reefs, Cod Hole and Lizard Island with visits to Bougainville and Osprey Reef in the Coral Sea. To learn more, call *Dive In Australia*, (415) 421-5588.

FITZROY ISLAND.

Only a 45-minute cruise from Cairns, Fitzroy Island is an unspoiled tropical jungle with huge volcanic rock formations. It is surrounded by coral reefs that create many superb diving areas. The resort offers a variety of accommodations and features a complete dive shop with resident instructors. Fitzroy is your chance to enjoy a virtually undiscovered paradise. For brochure, call (213) 381-3062.

nder Down Under.

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For one of the world's truly awesome underwater spectacles, explore the Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Sea with Australia's longest-established dive boat service. Discover virgin reefs, thousand-pound marlin, rays and turtles as you sail aboard the 12-passenger Reef Explorer or 10-passenger Auriga Bay. For larger groups, the company also operates the 112-foot, 20-passenger Challenger. You can enjoy day dive trips from Cairns to the Great Barrier Reef on the Down Under, a 41-foot, high-speed catamaran. All vessels are available for charter. And they all have sophisticated navigational aids such as a satellite navigator to pinpoint submerged reefs, autopilot, radar, and echo sounder. Barry May, a pioneer of Australian dive tourism, is an expert at finding superior diving sites. For more information about Reef Explorer Cruises and its wide variety of dive packages, call *Dive In Australia*, (415) 421-5588.



MIKE BALL WATERSPORTS.

Watersport specializes in regular, guaranteed departures to the legendary Yongala wreck and Great Barrier Reef. E-6 processing, diver propulsion vehicles, sailboards and PADI specialty courses available on board. This very large, stable,

air-conditioned dive vessel is owned by Australia's renowned diver training center, Mike Ball Watersports. Trips offer unlimited diving and exceptional value: 2 days \$150, 4 days \$445, 6 days \$595. Call *Dive In Australia*, (415) 421-5588.



PORT DOUGLAS.

Located in tropical Port Douglas is Australia's northernmost fully professional diving facility serving the Great Barrier Reef. In a little over an hour, their 55-foot custom-built luxury dive boat will speed you at 25 knots to some of the best dive sites in the world. There you can enjoy stunning underwater scenery with the expert assistance of the boat's professional crew. The company also offers exciting land-based packages that include 4-wheel-drive Safaris through one of the world's last remaining virgin rain forests — a tropical adventure you will long remember. For more information, call *Sea Safaris*, (213) 546-2464.

HERON ISLAND.

The only diving resort situated on the Great Barrier Reef, Heron Island offers access to some of the world's finest diving. Full dive facilities include four dive boats and over 60 rental scuba tanks. Only 26 minutes from Gladstone by helicopter, Heron is the home ground of tame moray eels, friendly manta rays, sea turtles (seasonal), and a huge variety of fish and coral. This colorful sea life makes it ideal for underwater photography. Lodging is available to fit most budgets and includes three meals and two dives per day, as well as tanks, weights and air. For information, call (714) 786-0119.





The Cayman Islander offers the budget minded diver the opportunity to stay in Cayman's famous Seven Mile Beach area. The well landscaped grounds feature hammocks and a freshwater pool. Doubloon-like tokens (inset) purchase drinks at the Islander's bar. Bob Soto's Diving Limited transports Cayman Islander guests to fabulous underwater sites such as the wreck of the *Oro Verde*.



It is no secret that a Caribbean dive vacation can be expensive, especially if you select a super deluxe beach hotel on world famous Seven Mile Beach. As Grand Cayman's choicest resort real estate, this sun drenched seashore area commands top dollar from vacationing divers and tourists alike. Yet there is an opportunity for a budget minded diver to vacation in the same area and enjoy the same select dive sites.

The Cayman Islander is a small motel style resort facility on the main road of the Seven Mile Beach area. While it may not be fancy, it is cozy, comfortable and clean. Owned and operated by an all Caymanian staff, this hotel offers a warm, friendly atmosphere. Caymanian born manager, Rex Miller, is a seasoned veteran of 15 years management of Cayman hotels. He and his staff make you feel right at home.

The main attraction of the Cayman Islander is, of course, the price. Here, divers can enjoy the same atmosphere, the same proximity to Seven Mile Beach action and the same superb diving as those staying at the high priced hotels. The only difference is that your room is not right on

the Islander is the open air poolside restaurant/bar. This facility serves breakfast, lunch and casual light dinners. The restaurant opens at 7:00 am, which is ideal for those who have an early morning dive pick up. It serves a wholesome breakfast, including great omelettes. You cannot beat the Islander for lunch, it offers the best hamburger on the island. The bar is open for Happy Hour from 5:00 to 7:00 pm daily, offering drinks at \$1 each.

As for dining out, some of Grand Cayman's best restaurants are within a one mile radius of the Islander. If you are in the mood for gourmet dining, you might try Le Diplomat, Chez Jacques or Caribbean Club. These are all top notch restaurants less than three minutes by cab from your doorstep.

On the other hand, if you are seeking a more casual dinner with good food, you might try one of the several in-spots for divers such as DJ's, Edoardos Trattoria, Davey's Seafood or the Lone Star Bar & Grill. The divemasters give these spots enthusiastic ratings. The Golden Pagoda (Chinese) and the Primavera Restaurant (Italian) are virtually next door to the hotel, just a short walk from your room.

Soto's provides free pick-up and return for Cayman Islander guests, using a customized truck called Soto's Shuttle. Pick-up time for the morning dive is 8:30 am, returning to the hotel between 12:30 and 1:00 pm. Guests are transported to the Holiday Inn beach, which is Soto's center for all dive trip departures. The ride takes less than three minutes. Morning trips are two tank dives at two different locations. The first is a deep wall and the second a coral reef in shallow to medium depths.

Cayman Islander pick-ups for the afternoon dive are at 1:30 pm, returning to the hotel at approximately 4:30 pm. While afternoon boat trips are not part of the Cayman Islander dive package, they are available as an option. Night dive departures depend on the time of sunset.

DIVE SITES

Since Seven Mile Beach is central to the majority of Grand Cayman's diving, guests staying at the Islander have access to some of the most beautiful and exciting reefs anywhere in the Caribbean. Over 30 top dive sites are within a 20 minute boat ride from Seven Mile Beach.

The most popular wall dives for the

Cayman Islander

the beach, and for some, the trade-off is well worth it.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Cayman Islander is right on the main drag, West Bay Road. It is centrally located—two miles from George Town, five miles from the airport and one mile from the Holiday Inn. The beach is across the street, just a few hundred yards from the hotel's front door.

Every room has air-conditioning, two double beds and a private bath. All of the rooms have satellite TV and telephone service is available in the hotel lobby.

The hotel grounds are spacious, well landscaped and there is a freshwater swimming pool in the center. There is more than ample parking, and much to the delight of gear lugging divers, you can get the car almost next to your hotel room door.

CUISINE

One of the social gathering points at

Island Charm At Bargain Prices

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GERI MURPHY

DIVING ROUTINE

Diving services for the Islander are operated by Bob Soto's Diving Limited, the longest established and best known dive operation on Grand Cayman. Soto started this business almost 30 years ago and it is still going strong under the dynamic leadership of Ron Kipp.

Soto's is a major diving company with a fleet of seven boats, tons of tanks and dozens of divemasters. Its motto is, "we put small groups on large dive boats." There are morning and afternoon dives daily and night dives twice weekly.

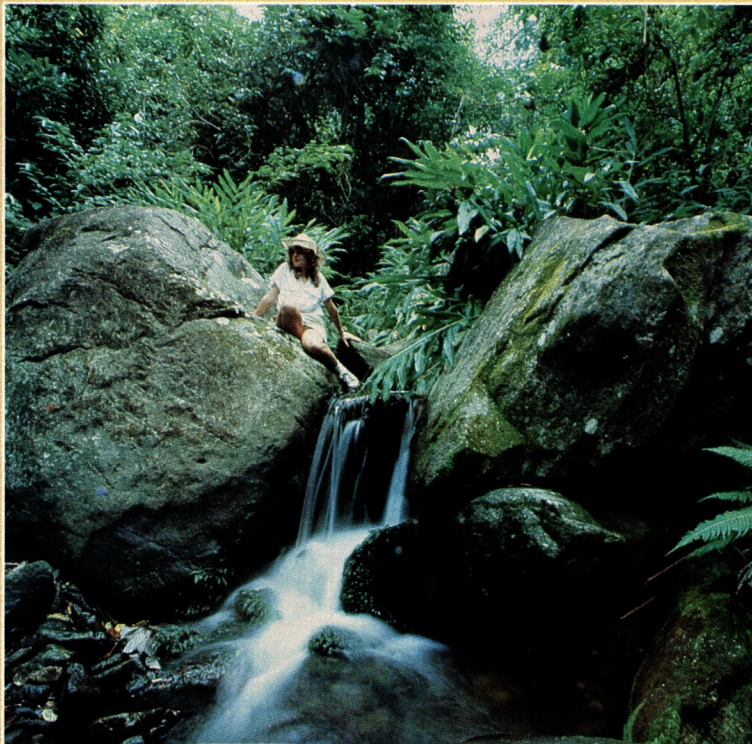
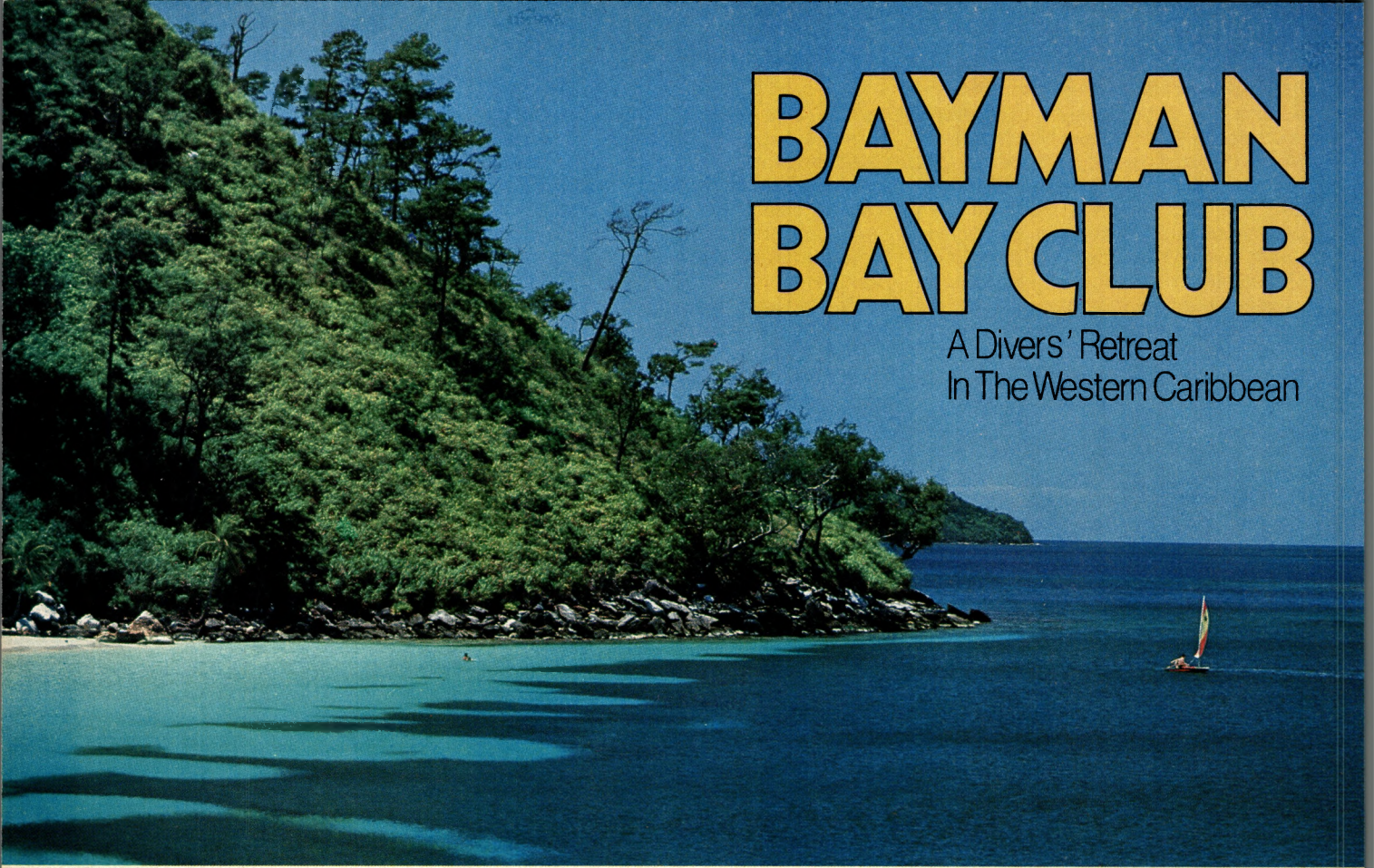
early morning descent are spots such as Orange Canyon, Sentinel Rock and Round Rock. These are sheer walls with a breathtaking array of gorgonian fans. Big Dipper is the site of a gigantic basket sponge, while Trinity Caves is a winding coral canyon with sponges and a magnificent black coral tree. There is an awesome ten foot tall barrel sponge at Sand Chute and a marvelous archway at Big Tunnel. Underwater visibility at these sites can range from 150 to 200 feet, depending on the day and the current.

After a surface interval, the boat moves to the second morning location, which can prove to be just as fascinating. Spanish Anchor is a lovely reef filled with living corals and small sponges. Aquarium is great for angelfish and other tame tropicals. Three Tree Reef and Hammerhead Hole are two more delightful spots. And, last but not least, is the famous Oro Verde wreck, a 180 foot steel freighter still intact and lying in 50 feet of water. It

(Continued on Page 106)

BAYMAN BAY CLUB

A Divers' Retreat
In The Western Caribbean



Top and above: The Bayman Bay Club, on the island of Guanaja in Honduras' Bay Islands, offers views of the tropical sea, jungle and sky—far from the clutter of civilization. Above right: The resort's mainhouse, perched on a verdant hillside, radiates the warmth of tropical wood and native appointment. It is the focal point for social activities. Right: The 40 foot *Nimitz* is the BBC's custom dive boat.



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK FREHSEE

Looking more like a safari lodge than a diver's retreat, the little Bayman Bay Club is the essence of the tropical state of being. In addition to a wilderness diving environment, the island of Guanaja in general, and the resort in particular, provide a perfect hideaway and a bastion of sanity: They are unencumbered, mostly uninhabited and exquisitely primitive.

The views are of the ocean and forest and sky; there are no TVs, superhighways or shopping centers. Indeed, there are no roads, no cars at all and very few visitors owing to the relative state of isolation. Here you are safe—even hidden—from the trappings of civilization, without missing any significant creature comforts.

In a style reminiscent of Fantasy Island, you arrive on Guanaja via DC-3 after transferring from a Tan Sahsa jet on the coastal mainland. The flight time from Houston, New Orleans or Miami is less than three hours. From the airstrip, a small outboard "taxi" takes divers and baggage through a mangrove lined canal and out to a wide lagoon. Ten minutes later, you arrive at the Bayman Bay Club.

Ascending the wooden steps to the resort, visitors begin to sense the spirit of the place. The mainhouse, perched on a verdant hill, looks ideal for a cultured Tarzan and Jane. Bathed by sunlight diffused through greenery, it radiates the warmth of tropical wood and native appointment. The resort is surrounded by the fruit, palms and flowers of a tropical forest. Above, in the treetops, parrots and seabirds screech and squawk to the iguanas sunning themselves on the volcanic rocks.

There are only nine guest units at present. A cluster of native wood bungalows sits on a hillside and is connected by wooden slat walkways that run along lighted paths to the clubhouse. Each cottage is open on three sides to the trade winds (screened jalousies) and has a spacious bedroom, overhead fan, hot shower and private porch. The dwellings are surrounded by thickets of palms, pines, papaya, mango, frangipani, hibiscus and orange trees.

The Bayman Bay Club began in the early 1970s as the personal vision of Tom Fouke, formerly from St. Louis. With a background in jungle skills attained during an army stint in Panama, the tenacious Fouke spent more than a year clearing the hillside and constructing the main building and guest bungalows. When the club opened in 1975, divers began to discover the call of wilderness diving and have been contributing to the main occupancy of the resort ever since.

Although there were minor setbacks from rare tropical storms in the late '70s, the Bayman Bay Club has been growing steadily. Nineteen eighty-six was the best year of all, owing in part to the fact that Tom and his wife Linda have become ac-



Divers enter the caverns at Black Rocks. This is the most dramatic and unusual site within easy reach of the BBC dock, yet a diverse collection of excellent traditional sites are visited. Mystery dives to unexplored locations are also scheduled.

tive managers at the resort. With Tom at the helm, the staff at Bayman Bay has never been more pleasant or efficient. I particularly am fond of young Beau Bush—the divemaster and a Bay Islander with considerable commercial diving experience throughout these islands.

An expansion program with new bungalows, some of which will be offered for sale, is now underway. Since our last visit, a significant amount of decorating and refurbishing has been accomplished. Those who might have found the little bungalows slightly Spartan will be delighted with the new safari style netting over the beds, as practical as it is pretty. Families that wish to stay together will appreciate the fold-out oriental style beds that have been added to several rooms. Lighting fixtures and some furnishings are new in the mainhouse.

Less esoteric but extremely advantageous is the new generator plant and brand new dive shop—with two new compressors—off the main dock. The laundry and kitchen have also been improved for better service.

Most welcome is the new, spacious and well-equipped 40 foot dive boat *Nimitz*. The little *Son of the Beach* now serves as a ferry. Rumors suggest an even larger dive boat in the near future.

Bay Island reefs are characterized by mammoth formations separated by wide, deep channels. The spur and groove system of Caribbean reefs is well documented but the condition is most exag-

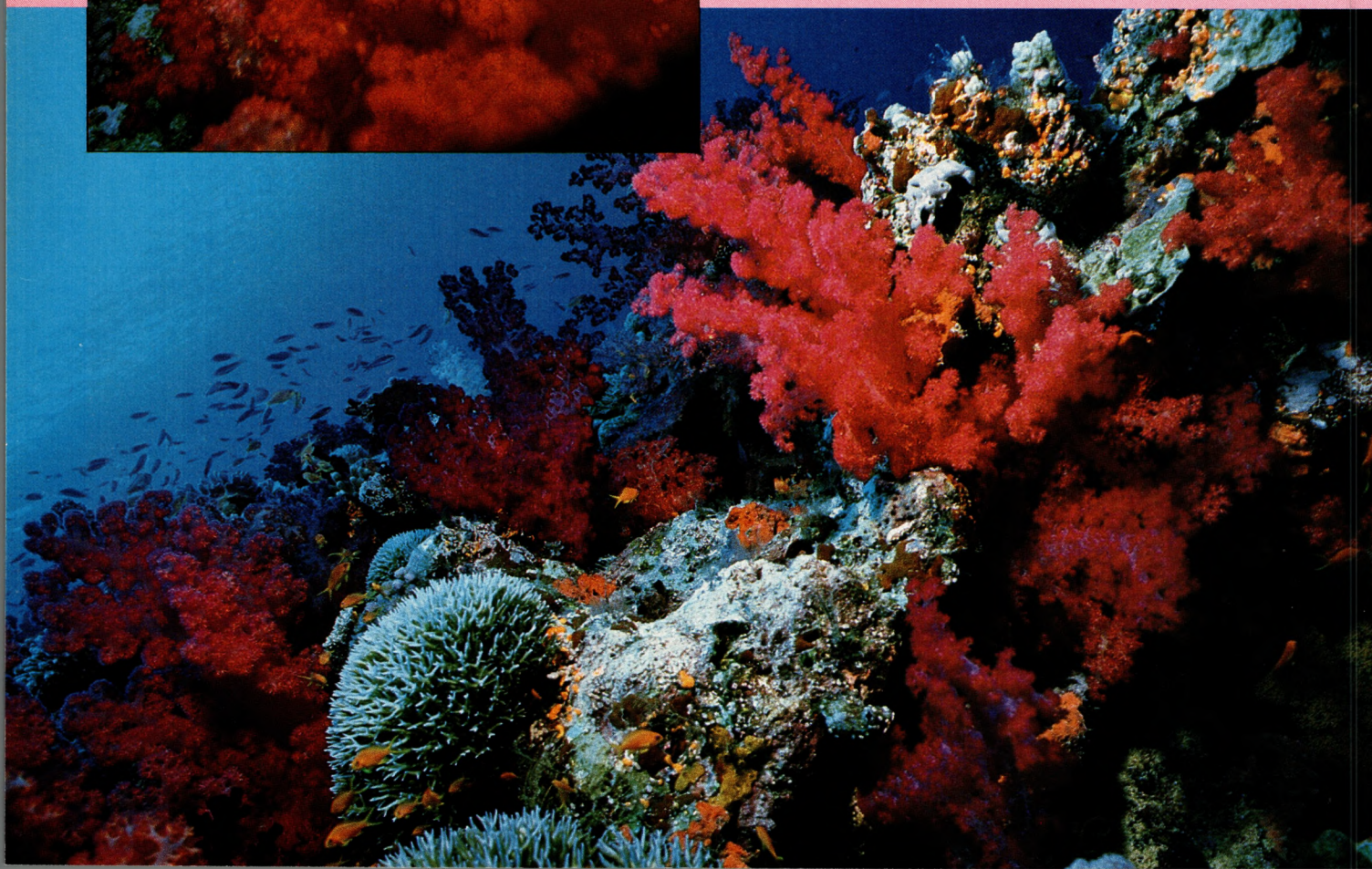
gerated in the Bay Islands. On the north side of Guanaja are a number of extreme examples associated with ancient river beds. The incredible Bayman Drop dive site is in fact an inside wall that falls to a river bed more than 200 feet below and more than 600 feet across. Adjacent to the drop-off are several pinnacles that come close to realizing the proportions of sea mounts. Excellent examples of exciting wall life abound, including colorful sponges, black coral trees and huge deepwater seafans. Pelagic fishes such as jacks, mackerel, eagle rays and an occasional shark patrol the irregular shelves. Visibility in these areas is not often more than 100 feet but is most always an acceptable 60-80 feet allowing for good wide angle or close-up photography.

Fringing and patch reefs surround Guanaja, often within swimming distance from shore. Kitchen Reef, directly off the resort, provides grounds for excellent daytime snorkeling and nighttime scuba diving with a good selection of interesting and unusual macro critters such as octopus, orange ball anemones and ruffle-back nudibranchs. The shallow reefs also stage seemingly endless parades of sergeant majors, parrotfish, blue tangs and a variety of beautiful reef fish such as indigo wrasse, yellow coneys and Spanish hogfish. There is a delightful coral-iron-shore formation to the west of the dock and the dock itself is often a refuge for schools of silvery pilchards.

(Continued on Page 102)



Underwater and above, the islands of Fiji's Northern Group have a natural beauty that's more poem than prose. Left: Vibrant soft corals off Taveuni. Above: Clownfish off Qamea. Below: Ric Cammick's *Lelewai*. Bottom: The wall at Taveuni.



Of all the special diving places around the world, only a certain few work so well they develop a lyric quality that defies comparison. The islands of Fiji have that special quality; and the small resorts of Fiji's Northern Group have blended the natural beauty of their islands and underwater world into a diving fantasy that is more poem than prose.

Fiji used to be far away. Only very experienced travelers took the time and trouble to discover it. Modern air service has brought Fiji much closer. From the West Coast, my Continental flight took only 12 and one-half hours, and that included a stop in Honolulu.

FIJI'S NORTHERN GROUP

Soft Coral Fantasy In The South Pacific

Fiji also used to be expensive to get to. That has changed also. With some Continental round trip flights costing less than \$600, the faraway, exotic South Pacific is now one of the most affordable dive destinations around.

I landed at Nadi's (pronounced nan-dee) modern international airport and immediately learned a new word, *Bula*. It is the universal Fijian greeting, and that's an important part of the poem. Every Fijian will greet you with "*Bula*" and a smile.

At Nadi, on the island of Vitu Levu, I still faced a short layover and a quick flight to the Northern Group, just off of Fiji's second largest island, Vanua Levu. I steeled myself for the inevitable problems with transfers, etc. None materialized. A representative from Rosie's Tours met us just outside of customs and arranged all of our transfers and baggage. There was even a quick drive to a nearby hotel to freshen up and have breakfast before continuing on.

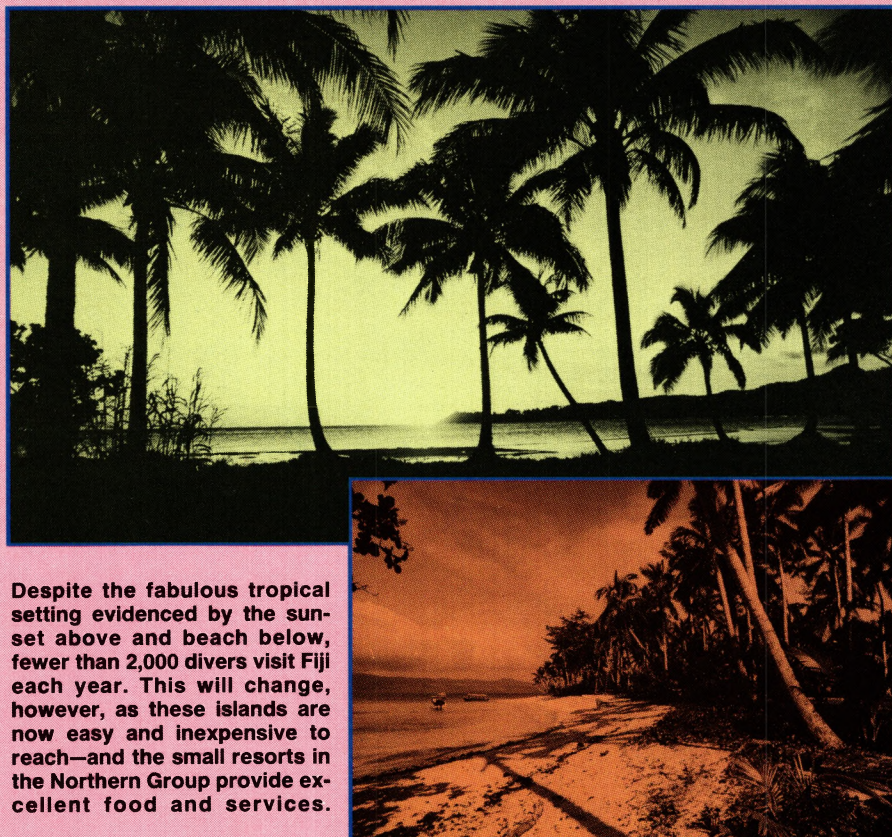
A driver picked us up after breakfast and we boarded Sunflower Airlines 20 passenger Heron for the 45 minute flight to the Northern Group. It's unusual for domestic, not to mention foreign, travel to flow so smoothly. But, that's one of the reasons Fiji's a poem and not a story. Everything rhymes in a poem and that's the feeling you get from Fiji.

The Northern Group offers three distinct resorts: Ric Cammick's Dive Taveuni on the island of Taveuni, Qamea Beach Club on the island of Qamea and Namale Plantation on the coast Vanua Levu. Flying in at low altitude gives an excellent first impression: green hills, small Fijian villages, barrier reef and clear water. What a fantastic way to get away from it all! And, that's exactly what I proceeded to do.

My first stop was the Qamea Beach Club (pronounced gah-may-a), just a short cab and boat ride from the airport at Taveuni. Fijian hospitality is always present. People greet you at the airport,

windsurfing or out on a Hobi Cat, just ask one of the staff. Off you go. Volleyball with the staff? Easy to arrange. Diving? No problem. Just hand over your C-card and your equipment and that's all that's required for the week. There's a trained divemaster, 30 foot dive boat and a great variety of sites. The diving service is designed for your ease and comfort. The staff sets up your gear (unless you request otherwise) and washes it after every dive—more thoroughly than most divers do, I might add. If there's a caution about Qamea, it's be prepared to relax and enjoy the excellent service.

The diving, usually arranged several



Despite the fabulous tropical setting evidenced by the sunset above and beach below, fewer than 2,000 divers visit Fiji each year. This will change, however, as these islands are now easy and inexpensive to reach—and the small resorts in the Northern Group provide excellent food and services.

help you with your luggage and tell you about the islands as they help you complete your journey. And, very surprising to U.S. travelers, they do not expect a tip! Tipping is not a custom anywhere in Fiji.

Your first sight of the Qamea Beach Club will be of an idyllic South Pacific island and a pristine white beach. You have to look closer to see ten private *bures* (as cottages are called in Fiji) and the large, thatch roofed dining and lounge area. Your hosts, Frank and Jo Kloss, meet you on the beach. Your *bure* is already prepared, and the only check-in procedure is to say "*Bula*."

Qamea is not a dedicated dive resort in the strict sense of the word. Of 20 or so guests, fewer than half will be divers, by design of the owners. The philosophy is that Qamea is a place to relax, to enjoy good food and devote your vacation to having fun. That means if you'd like to go

times a day according to the tides, features a varied menu of South Pacific sites to choose from. If you'd like walls, just ask. Soft corals in every rainbow color? No problem. Shallower sites with hard corals you won't see anywhere outside of the South Pacific? They're available every day! I sampled several of the dives and found the reefs untouched and the hard corals spectacular.

There's one more easy feature: Almost all dives at Qamea are one-way; you travel in one direction with the dive boat following you. While mild current is sometimes present, I didn't encounter any during my short stay.

While Qamea is certainly a small resort, the facilities are superb. Your cottage is private, with polished hardwood floors and a thatched roof. The meals are memorable and the staff well trained. Qa-

(Continued on Page 104)

THE PHILIPPINES

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROD AND KATHY CANHAM

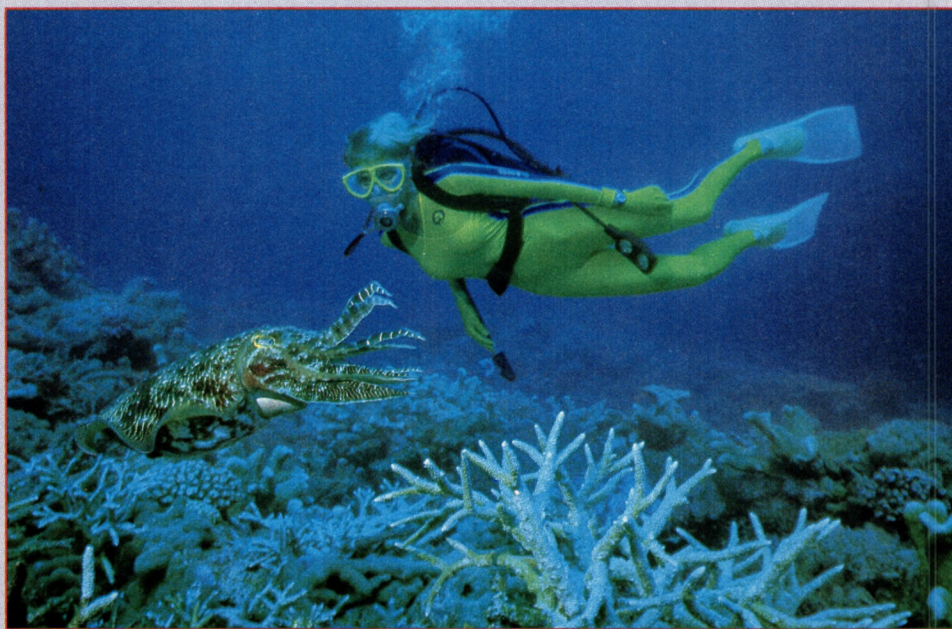
The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands. With 13,250 square miles of coral reefs, it is reputed to offer the largest unexplored diving frontier in the world. With a lull in the troubled political arena, an opportunity to experience diving off a live-aboard boat was too tantalizing to resist. Arrangements were made through Art Travers at Poseidon Ventures Tours, the exclusive stateside agent for Gloria Maris Adventures, Inc. and the *Lady of the Sea*.

MANILA

The flight from Honolulu, via a Philippine Airlines 747, took nine and one-half hours. At Manila International Airport our group of 20 was greeted by Theresa Jison, the general manager of Gloria Maris. It is her job to smooth out any rough edges on the trip. Theresa's attention to detail was apparent, and soon we had cleared immigrations, picked up our baggage and were off to our hotel via an air-conditioned bus. Poseidon Ventures' tour groups stay at either the historic Manila Hotel or the Philippine Plaza. Recovery from jet lag and an opportunity to tour Manila justify spending a day in the Philippine's capital city.

English is the official language of these islands so communication is no problem. The country's ties to the United States date back to 1898 when Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila Bay and wrested control of the islands from Spain. After 50 years of colonial rule, the country was granted independence and has been our

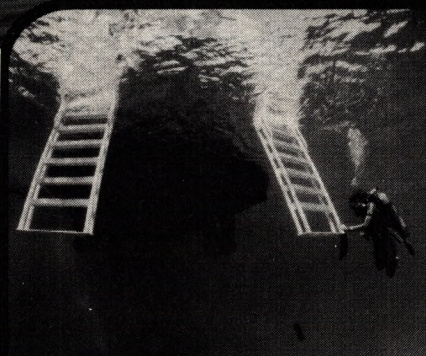
(Continued on Page 97)



The Philippines offers 13,250 square miles of coral reefs and is reputed to have the largest unexplored diving frontier in the world. The 127 foot live-aboard M/V *Lady of the Sea* carries divers to this frontier. Top: Immune to the sting of its host, a crab finds protection in the tentacles of an anemone. Above: Kathy Canham swims with a large cuttlefish. Right: A Philippine Airlines 747.



Cayman's Fastest Dive Hotel



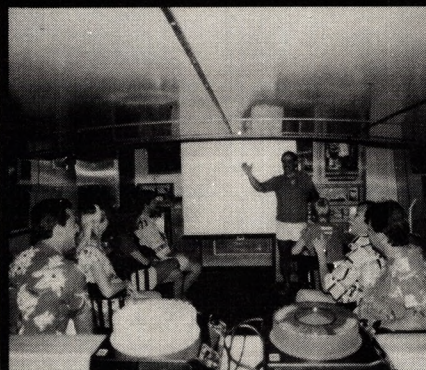
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Dive deck



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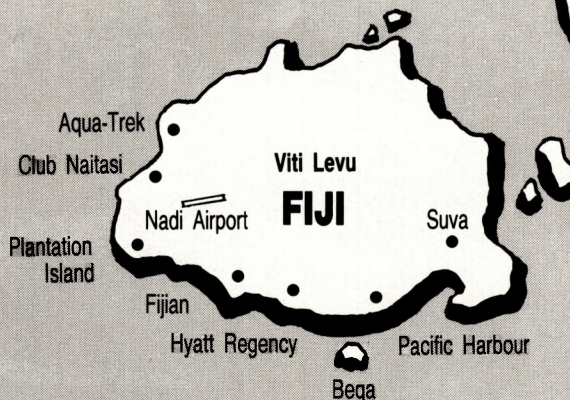
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Photo by Les Fields

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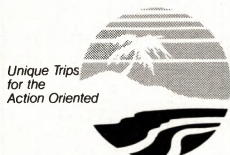
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THE PHILIPPINES

(Continued from Page 92)

unwaivering ally ever since. Living up to their reputation for hospitality, the people treated us like special guests, their smiles abundant and freely given.

The market place is internationally known for its handicrafts, woodcarvings and leather goods, all there for the bargaining. Food and goods range from one-third to one-half normal stateside prices. Money can be exchanged at the hotel (20P=\$1), but handbags, jewelry and passports should be left there.

Nowhere did we feel threatened by the political turmoil we had heard so much about in the media. People tend to day-to-day business in an unaffected manner. Merchants barter to get the most for their goods, children in rags beg for a peso on street corners and the omnipresent jeepney, garish, colorful and fun, vies for fares and a rightful place in the congestion of Manila traffic.

The now familiar Malacañang Palace, Manila Hotel and Roxas Boulevard were on our tour but a recommended stop is the American Cemetery and Memorial in Rizal province. There lie 17,206 of our dead, most killed in the 1941-42 defense of the islands. It is a poignant reminder of why the Filipinos have such strong political and emotional ties to our country.

LADY OF THE SEA

The M/V *Lady of the Sea* was commissioned by Gloria Maris Adventures, Inc. in 1978. Currently docked at San Jose on the southern tip of Mindoro Island, it is an easy 40 minute flight from Manila via a Philippine Airlines BAC 1-11 jet. At initial glance the *Lady of the Sea* is not long on luxury, but the former British sub chaser has been refurbished inside for comfort and practicality. One hundred twenty-seven feet long and 20 feet wide, she has 12 cabins (with central air-conditioning), five heads and sleeps as many as 34 passengers and 14 crew members. There are individual gear storage bins topside. The upper deck has a canopied overhead and lounge chairs for sunbathing. (A wide brimmed hat and sunscreen are recommended.) The twin 550 hp engines provide a cruising speed of 12 knots. Within one and one-half hour of our departure, we anchored off Ilin Point.

Porfirio Castañeda coordinates all Poseidon Ventures' dive operations aboard the *Lady of the Sea*. An accomplished wildlife artist, Pir heads the Coral Reef Research and Management Project and coauthored *The Diver's Guide to the Philippines*, (from Unicorn Books Limited, Hong Kong).

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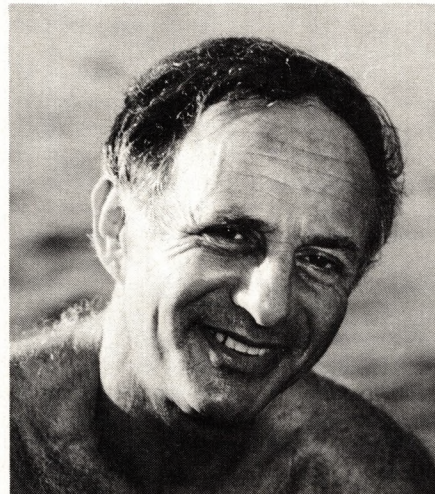


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THE PHILIPPINES

tion of the ship. Tanks are filled to 2,250 psi from one of two 15 cfm compressors. Six crew members are available to assist divers with their gear onto the dive platform and into one of the three chase boats. Travel time to any site is only minutes and post-dive pickups are prompt.

The 30 to 40 foot visibility we initially encountered at Ilin was caused by runoff from large land masses. Live-aboard dive



Art Travers, president of Poseidon Ventures Tours, the exclusive stateside agency for the live-aboard *Lady of the Sea*.

boats solve that problem by taking divers to remote sites not normally accessible from resort based operations. The 81°F water temperature minimizes the necessity of thermal wear but we recommend some form of body covering for protection from coral scrapes and hydroids.

The wall at Ilin drops to 140 feet and is profusely covered with gorgonians, basket sponges and crinoids. It's a macro photographer's delight. Gold fringed flatworms, fluorescent orange nudibranchs and violet tunicates are a fraction of the offerings. After the dive, tanks are changed, cameras reloaded and it's time for a quick lunch.

All meals aboard the ship are served buffet style. Food is plentiful and some of the selections include fish, shrimp, chicken, pasta, fresh fruit and vegetables. An open bar serves soft drinks and the local favorite, San Miguel beer. Over lunch we learned our voyage would center in the Palawan area of the Sulu Sea. Of the 56 islands in this vicinity, one-third have been opened to Gloria Maris clientele for diving. More sites are constantly being researched and explored for the future. Gloria Maris maintains confidentiality of these sites and steers groups clear of any area affected by illegal reef dynamiting and poaching.

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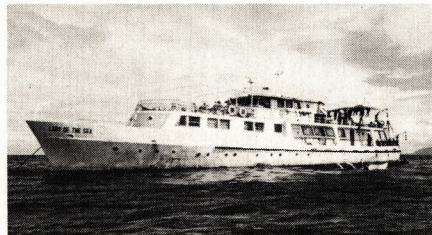
Dive Hawaii

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OF MAUI

Our night dive was intense and exotic. Basket stars, arms fully extended, faced into the current to feed on passing plankton. Vivid red sea hares, eggshell cowries and butterfly lionfish helped us expend our film readily. As soon as the last diver was retrieved, the ship was underway for an all night sail to the next destination. Maintaining 24 hour radio surveillance to monitor weather, *Lady of*



The motor vessel *Lady of the Sea*.

the Sea provides groups the best choice of diving possible. Over the ensuing days, we would experience a wide variety of plush, clear (80 to 150 feet visibility) diving in topography as varied as the marine life we would encounter. From close observations of cuttlefish to manta rays circling our chase boats, the diversity was endless. The crustaceans, fish and invertebrates are as colorful as any we had experienced.

For more information on the *Lady of the Sea* contact: Art Travers, Poseidon Ventures Tours, 359 San Miguel Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660; (800) 854-9334, in California (714) 644-5344. You may also contact Michele Harrison at: 505 N. Belt, Suite 675, Houston, TX 77060; (713) 820-DIVE.

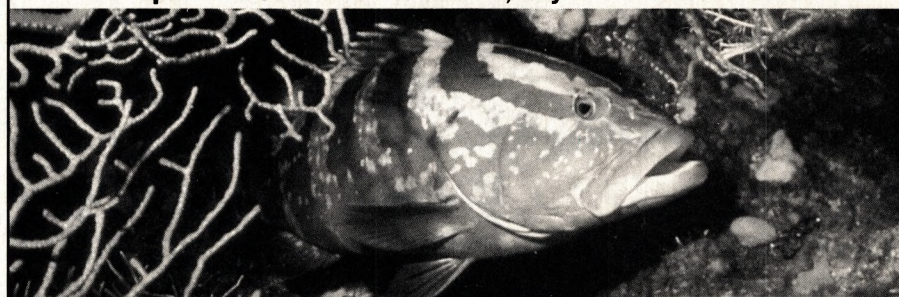
LA STREGA HOSTS U/W VIDEO SEMINAR

A one week underwater video seminar and training course, culminating with the PADI certification of Underwater Videographer for the participants, will be conducted in Belize this spring. The seminar will be hosted by Belize's live-aboard dive boat, the motor yacht *La Strega*, and will be conducted by Bill Tucker, formerly the underwater videographer for the television series *Scuba World*.

The first of these seven day courses will be offered May 31-June 6. The courses are designed to provide hands-on, on site, personalized video instruction by professionals. The course will cover equipment, lighting, technique, editing and more. Students will take home the tapes they produced during the trip.

Consistent with *La Strega's* all inclusive policy, the price of the seminar includes all costs—instruction, certification, use of video equipment, unlimited diving, meals, etc. Complete details and reservation information can be obtained by contacting the office of *La Strega*, 5818 Green Falls Drive, Houston, TX 77088, or call toll free (800) 433-DIVE. Texas and Canadian residents may call collect (713) 999-4852.

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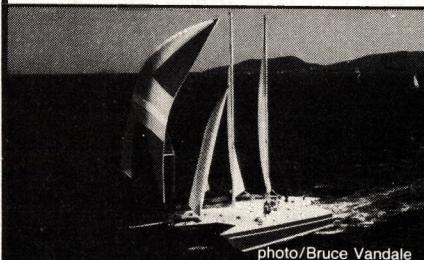
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PRO DIVE

(Continued from Page 83)

berjacks darting through the massive schools of baitfish that enveloped the wheelhouse. Inside the wheelhouse was a resident barracuda we would come to expect in the same location on all our subsequent dives to the wreck. The ladders, stern railings and many of the overhead areas were absolutely thick with white colonial hydroids. These concentrations are even thicker than those on the midsection of the *Rhone* in the BVI, and the *Mercedes* has only been underwater for a couple of years. There is already a resident green moray and the undersides of the hull are colorfully sponge-encrusted. Squadrans of angelfish are constantly in evidence.

Other wrecks frequently part of the Pro Dive itinerary include the *Jay Scutti*, a 98 foot tugboat sitting in only 70 feet of water, the *Rebel*, a 150 foot German freighter in 105 feet of water, and the *Houseboat* in 85 feet of water. One of my favorites may not be as notorious as the *Mercedes*, but the *Rebel* is certainly just as fascinating. The marine life includes black groupers, amberjacks, barracudas, angelfish, parrotfish, yellowtails and mutton snappers. The wide panoramas are so spectacular on the *Rebel* that we never got around to shooting macro on the wreck, but arrowcrabs, blennies, banded coral shrimp and other minutiae were so abundant close-up work would have been very productive.

Pro Dive has a very complete retail facility with T-shirts, resort wear, scuba and snorkel equipment, swimwear and still camera and video rentals. The video programs are especially popular and reasonably priced at Pro Dive and since the Sony 8mm video system is rented with the Sony video light, the tapes are bright and colorful even at 100 foot depths or inside the wrecks.

For further information regarding instruction or resort diving packages, please contact Professional Diving Schools of Florida at the Bahia Mar Yachting Center, 801 Seabreeze Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33316 or call (800) 772-DIVE. In Florida phone (305) 761-3413. ✕

FIJI FANTASTIC

Tropical Adventures is offering new fully inclusive Fiji dive programs. These run from 9-18 days and visit such remote areas as Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Qamea. Tropical Adventures also offers live-aboard dive cruises through the remote Lau Group of Fiji's northeast coast.

For information on both individual and group departures contact Tropical Adventures, 170 Denny Way, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 441-3483 in Washington State, (800) 247-3483 U.S. toll free. ✕

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BAYMAN BAY

(Continued from Page 89)

All along the island's shallow and mid-reef formations are large, statuesque stands of pillar coral. Whatever environmental parameters are necessary for maximum pillar coral growth are here in the Bay Islands, the pillar coral capital of the Caribbean. Other Bay Islands signatures include cascading starlet and lettuce corals and a variety of sponges including yellow candlestick, red and purple rope and iridescent azure vase.

Particularly abundant along Guanaja's north and south coast are extensive caverns filled with thousands of silver pilchards and other baitfish. Often these honeycombed passages are frequented by large tarpon and occasionally, large jewfish are sighted. It is in these fish filled caverns that medium-sized bull sharks have been observed "sleeping" on the sandy bottom.

Recently excitement has been generated by the discovery of magnificent volcanic caverns one-half hour from the resort. From 10 to 80 feet deep at the area known as Black Rocks there are extensive rock fingers and coral covered boulders with giant canyons and winding passageways beneath the reef. Many of the passageways are large enough for a

truck while others are narrow, single file labyrinths. Many of the smaller canyons are covered with a coral roof. Exploring these caverns will reveal the dramatic shapes of pillow lava, rolled and pleated like giant car seats. This once molten rock escaped from the bowels of the islands and hardened in the tepid sea while still flowing. It is easy to feel dwarfed by the surrounding canyons and impressed with the awareness of island formation preserved in the cavern walls.

Although Black Rocks is the most dramatic and unusual dive site within easy reach of the club dock, there are some 35 locations that represent more traditional diving grounds. Most divers will be pleased with sites such as Fantasy Reef, Pavilions, Pinnacles and the Bayman Shelf. There is a good deal of diversity among these sites and it is exciting to consider that only a small portion of the total dive area has really been explored. Mystery dives are scheduled during each group week with the possibility of a new and exciting discovery waiting below. Many sites have been named after the group or the group leader making the first dive in a new location.

Although any real nightlife is restricted to a Saturday evening trip into Bonacca town (an incredible little stilt-suspended township one mile offshore), there is much to consider beyond the diving at Bayman Bay Club. Meals are a combination of familiar foods and island or Latin-

This is Anthony's Key

Seductive and tantalizing Anthony's Key Resort. What appears to be a Gauguin painting is really the most beautiful seclusion for divers and dreamers in the world. Natural wood bungalows spill along a verdant hillside and across a palm-studded islet. A small dory transfers guests over a blue lagoon to the hillside restaurant.

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American specialties featuring local fruits and fresh breads with an emphasis on seafoods. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served family-style on the lower level of the mainhouse. A picturesque bar is open almost all of the time on the same level. On the level above is a three winged game room complete with a pool table and parlor games. The wing facing the ocean has a giant chaise lounge and couches offering a marvelous view of the horizon. The top level of the clubhouse is a cozy observation deck complete with native hammocks.

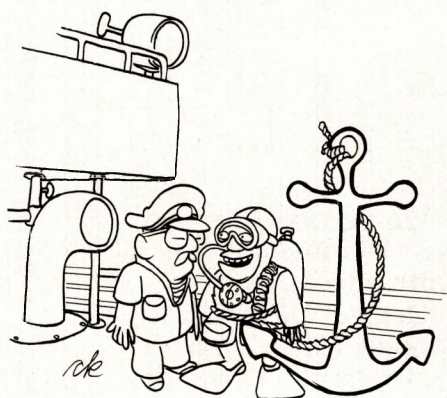
Below the mainhouse is a beautiful, creamy white beach forming a crescent shaped frame for picture perfect Bayman Bay. The wooden dock that supports the diving services has its own observation deck. A windsurfer and a small sailboat are available.

Behind the resort rise pine clad mountains inviting hiking and sightseeing. My favorite island diversion is exploring the magnificent waterfalls an hour up Big Gully, 30 minutes east of the resort. On several occasions, Tom Fouke and I have hiked up the gully alongside the flowing stream and have located several spectacular waterfalls. Each time we explore a little farther and so far have discovered four separate falls areas.

The island of Guanaja and the Bayman Bay Club offer an incredible escape from continental life. The diving is very good, often excellent, but the opportunity for personal rejuvenation is superb. Pre-occupations get washed away enroute and angry thoughts are purged by the natural sensuality of tropical surroundings. You may truly be a different person after this kind of a diving vacation.

The Bayman Bay Club offers a standard seven night package that includes a full selection of activities, three meals per day, two boat dives per day and unlimited shore diving. Special packages are available for groups of as many as 20.

For information, reservations or a color brochure, contact Terry or Lisa at: The Bayman Bay Club U.S. Executive Office, #1 Isle of Venice, #206, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301; (800) 524-1823 (outside FL), (305) 525-8413 (in FL).



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BONAIRE



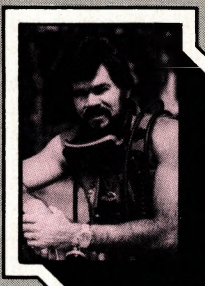
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FIJI

(Continued from Page 91)

mea caters to a wide variety of upscale people and it's not inexpensive. But, it is certainly on its way to being one of the best small resorts in the world.

If you're looking for truly advanced diving and want to spend most of your day doing so, try Ric Cammick's Dive Taveuni. Ric is the pioneer of diving in the Northern Group and has been diving in Taveuni since he left his native New Zealand 14 years ago.

You have two choices for accommodations on Taveuni: Ric's *bures* or the Moravu Hotel, literally across the road from Dive Taveuni. When you stay at Ric's, you are a guest of Ric and his wife, Do. You have your own *bure*, but the center of all activity is their home. You eat your meals there around a big family table (Do and the staff do a great job) and you trade dive stories over Fiji beer in a spacious living area overlooking the sea. The 11 acre grounds are beautifully landscaped. Since there are no more than eight guests, it is just one big family.

The Moravu Hotel, just across the way, features 10 *bures* and comes complete with pool, restaurant and bar set into the beautiful Fijian countryside. There's plen-

ty of space, plenty of peace and quiet and the excellent service of which all of the Northern Group is proud.

Dive Taveuni is, in Ric's words, "not for rank novices." The diving is varied and challenging. This is one of the soft coral capitals of the world: There are reds, whites, yellows, maroons and purples in all sizes and shapes. This is where the challenge comes in. Without a fair amount of current, soft corals do not proliferate and they do not stay opened and feeding (their most beautiful and photogenic state) without water flowing over them. The Straits of Somosomo, where Ric does all his diving, provide all of these conditions. The current, rather than flowing along the reef, flows over it. While this is great for the soft corals, it does present some challenges for divers. It usually means pulling yourself down a line in a moderate current to a depth of 60 or 70 feet—where the current becomes weak—before starting your dive. This is not a problem for experienced divers, and Ric gives a good briefing.

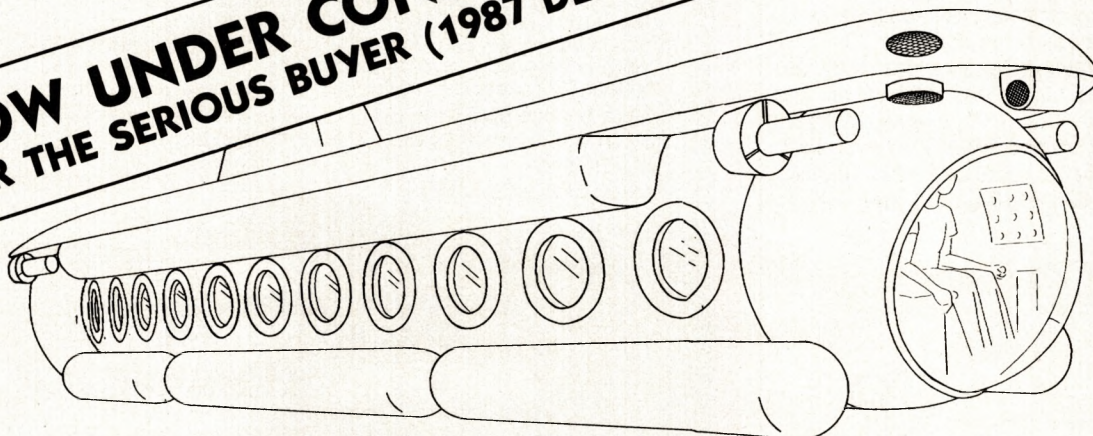
All of Ric's diving is done from his brand new, 36 foot custom designed aluminum dive boat, *Lelewai*. She's state-of-the-art, complete with walk-through transom, fresh water and plenty of sun and camera cover.

A must dive site is the Great White Wall—one of the best in the world. You descend to about 40 feet on the top of a



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wall, enter a large cave and descend again. Exit at 85 or 100 feet and you're on a wall. Descend another 20 feet and the wall turns white! As far as visibility permits (and it can be very clear), the wall is gleaming white soft corals. Because of the depth and current, this wall is one of the most challenging photographic subjects anywhere.

In addition Great White, Ric can offer dives on a variety of other walls and then usually anchors on one of several shallower sites for the second dive of the day. Pandora's Box, a garden of soft corals and schooling fish, was a favorite. I'd also recommend Blue Ribbon Eel, a wall dive that was particularly rich in dark red soft corals. The diving at Taveuni is spectacular but you'll probably have to work to really enjoy it.

After Taveuni, I boarded another short Sunflower Airlines flight to Savu Savu, on the coast of Vanua Levu, for a visit to Namale Plantation. Flying over, I saw some of the best examples of barrier reef anywhere—steep, sheer drop-offs. And, the diving at Namale followed suit: vertical walls, not too much current and some good shallow sites. The dive operation was run by a friendly Australian, Marc Hinton, and featured a 26 foot boat. The boat carries a maximum of eight divers, and is plenty big enough for that.

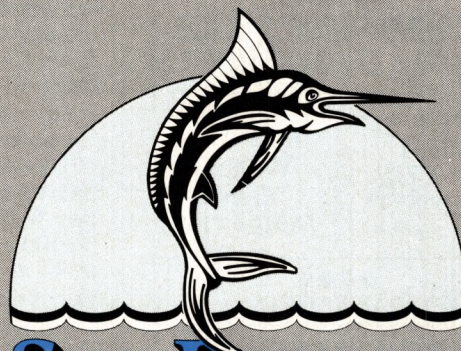
Namale Plantation is actually a working coconut plantation, and the resort's ten *bures* are clustered around the original main house. Lush and tropical, Namale provides excellent privacy for its guests and some great extra services (like mini bars in the *bures*) that make it hard to believe you're on a remote island in the South Pacific.

Your hosts are Curly and Liz, and one of them usually greets you right at the airport. The meals are served in the main-house and, often, outdoors. This is nature's paradise. Tropical birds, nature walks, lectures on Fijian folklore, and even a small library specializing in Fijian history and culture, are there for you to enjoy. While diving is offered every day, it's another good example of a well rounded small resort offering a diverse menu of activities to choose from.

Qamea, Taveuni, Moravu, Namale. Even the names of the resorts of the Northern Group begin a poem that promises the unusual and the exotic. Beneath the sea Fiji is a diver's dream, and it is untouched. Fewer than 2,000 divers per year visit Fiji, but word of this treasure is starting to spread. The people are one of the best reasons to visit Fiji, because their lifestyle is so different from our own. Every Fijian owns, by law, some land. The people grow up in villages, extended families really, and hospitality is really an extension of that village life. When you do visit a village in Fiji—and you must—you introduce yourself to the chief first and then meet the rest of the people.

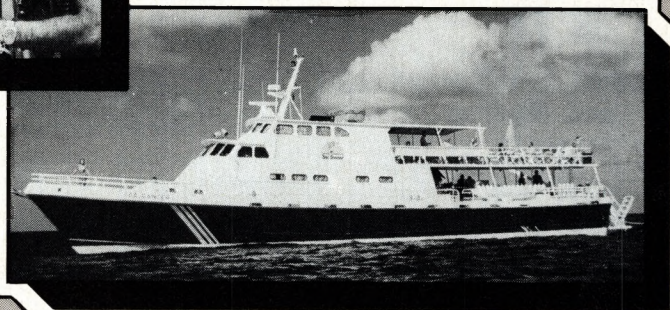
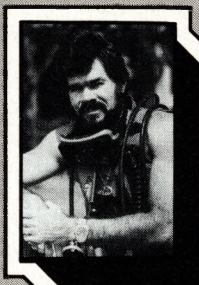
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CAYMAN ISLANDER

(Continued from Page 87)

is a great spot for photography, fish feeding and wreck exploration.

Afternoon dives are scheduled for a completely different selection of reef sites. Most are in 40 to 60 feet of water. Soto's Reef South is great for marine life observation while Devil's Grotto is a labyrinth of coral tunnels and caves. The *Balboa* wreck is a favorite spot for macro photography, while other shallow coral reefs include Soto's Reef North, Eden Rock and Hamburger Reef.

Night dives are scheduled twice weekly—the *Balboa* on Tuesdays and the *Oro Verde* on Saturdays. Both sites are a carnival of fish life and exotic reef creatures that only seem to appear during nocturnal hours. Nighttime excursions provide an exciting opportunity to glimpse a rare orange ball anemone, a parrotfish sleeping in its own cocoon or a prowling octopus.

SPECIAL PACKAGES

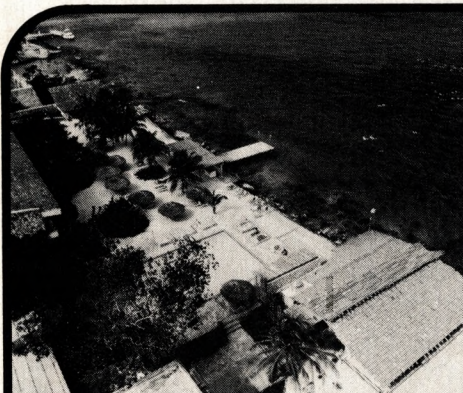
The Cayman Islander and Bob Soto's Diving Ltd. have created a special dive program known as the Bonus Dive Package. The prices are very low, making it one of the best buys on Seven Mile

Beach. The program is very flexible.

A diver staying at the Cayman Islander can purchase the package in two night, four night and six night lengths. The program is priced for single, double, triple or quadruple occupancy. When compared to similar programs at beachfront hotels such as the Holiday Inn, a diver can save up to \$130 on a full week package. For example, a week (eight days/seven nights) at the Cayman Islander, including diving, is only \$399. This special package price is in effect from April 25 to December 14.

The Bonus Dive Package includes an impressive number of features including: transportation from and to the dive boat, a welcome cocktail, a room with satellite TV, full breakfast daily, maid service daily, a morning two tank dive daily, one night dive or afternoon boat dive and unlimited shore diving. If you mention seeing the Cayman Islander ad in SKIN DIVER you also receive a free Bob Soto's T-shirt, but make sure you request it at the time you make your reservations.

The unlimited afternoon shore diving can be a big plus for those who want to cram in every dive possible. Cayman Islander guests can pick up their tanks, backpacks, dive flags and weightbelts at Bob Soto's Scuba Centre. Each person is limited to one tank, but can obtain all the air fills he/she wants. Shore diving can be done directly offshore the Scuba Centre or at one-half dozen shore entry sites



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around the island. This is where a rental car really pays off.

Incidentally, the diving part of the package can be upgraded or expanded upon request. For a few dollars more, guests can participate in Bob Soto's exclusive Double Wall Edge dive or go on the Direct North Wall Dive. Both programs are designed for experienced divers seeking advanced trips.

For more information about the Cayman Islander or the variety of bonus dive packages, you can contact: Reservation Manager, Cayman Islander Hotel, 5821 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite 203, Hollywood, FL 33021 or telephone U.S. toll free (800) 922-7555 or Florida toll free (800) 423-7555 or (305) 981-7555. The reservations office is open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

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FIJI

(Continued from Page 105)

and large hotels are unknown. It is very special, even to divers well versed in remote islands.

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For more information about the Northern Group, contact Tropical Adventures, 170 Denny Way, Seattle, Washington 98109 or call (800) 247-3483 or, in Washington, (206) 441-3483.

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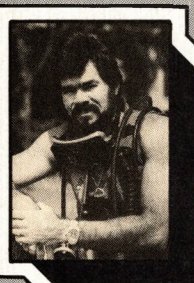


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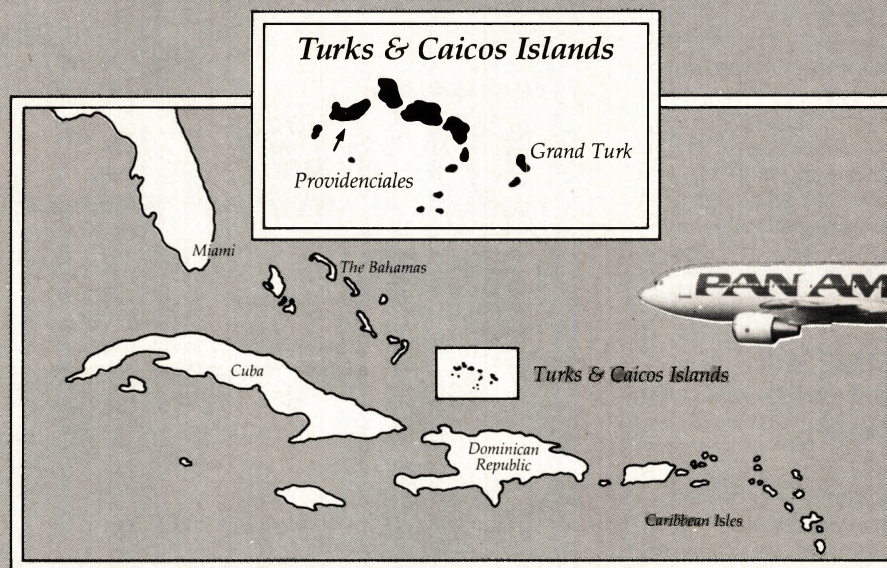
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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



Have you always wanted a racy red convertible? Well, the one shown on these pages won't strain your budget and needs little care. Although you may spend your weekends with it, it won't be because it needs washing, waxing or an oil change. Best of all, there are no licenses, insurance or other costs involved in owning it. That's because it's not a racy red convertible automobile, but a racy red convertible backpack dive gear

bag, from Wenoka.

It's called a convertible because of the shoulder straps. When you want to check the bag on an airplane, the straps tuck into a zippered compartment at the top and special sleeves at the bottom. This keeps the straps from getting caught on conveyor belts. When you want to carry the bag

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on your back, the straps can be removed from their hiding places and snapped together with adjustable quick release buckles in just seconds.

The Converta-Pac is the third backpack gear bag Wenoka has introduced. Each one has been larger than its predecessor. Model 1873 is very large, measuring 24 x 22 x 13.5 inches. There are two large pockets on the front, each of which measures 14 x 10 x 4 inches. The bottom one is padded on all sides. You can use it for dry storage or as an insulated food and drink carrier. The top pocket holds a padded regulator bag that comes with the Converta-Pac.

On both sides of this gear bag are two large (24 x 9.5 x 4 inches) zippered compartments. You can use one for your fins (almost all sizes will fit) and the other for your BC jacket. The main compartment—padded on all sides to protect your gear during transit—is more than large enough for all the rest of your gear and there will be room left over.

Wenoka gear is always thoughtfully designed, with attention to details, and the Converta-Pac is no exception. All of the sturdy nylon YKK zippers, for example, have double tabs (except the one for the shoulder straps). The shoulder straps are padded for comfort, as is the carrying handle on the top. All of the seams are double stitched with nylon thread and all stress points are box stitched, with an ex-



The Converta-Pac's straps tuck into pockets at the top and bottom of the bag.

tra piece of material sewn inside for strength. There's a place on the top for your business card or an address tag. The top pocket on the front has a patch pocket that can be used to keep such things as your dive tables or logbook handy. There is a plastic clip inside the main compartment for keys. On the bottom of both the main compartment and the two side compartments are brass grommets, for drainage.

The Converta-Pac is made of sturdy, durable Z-Tex nylon and coated with polyurethane on the inside to help keep

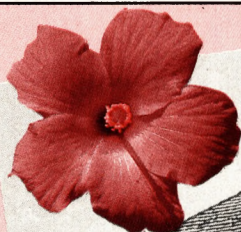
the contents dry on a wet dive boat.

All of Wenoka's gear bags require little care. When it gets soiled, rinse the Converta-Pac with fresh water and let dry. For heavy duty dirt you can use detergent and water; for oil or grease use a dry cleaning solvent.

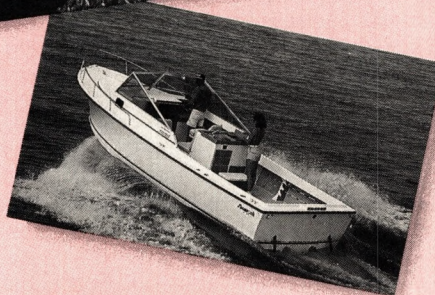
The 1873 Converta-Pac sells for just \$125. See one at your nearest Wenoka dealer: It's the most sensible racy red convertible you'll ever own! Oh yes, if you don't care for all red, the Converta-Pac also comes in black, with silver trim and blue, with red trim. 

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Diving News From Down Under

New Dive Boat At Port Douglas

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY

Brian Tweedie, owner and operator of Coral Sea Diving Services, recently announced the completion of his new high speed dive boat M/V *Aquanaut*. Coral Sea Diving is a full service dive shop and diving school in the small fishing village of Port Douglas, 40 miles north of Cairns. It is the northernmost dive shop on the Queensland coast and offers easy access to a wide range of Great Barrier Reef dive sites.

Almost three years in the making, the *Aquanaut* is a sleek, 56 foot, custom designed dive boat capable of 30 knots. Powered by twin 725 hp diesels, this craft can cruise at 24 knots with a full load of 30 divers. She can reach the northern barrier reef dive sites in less than 90 minutes, thus devoting the majority of the day to scuba exploration and snorkeling.

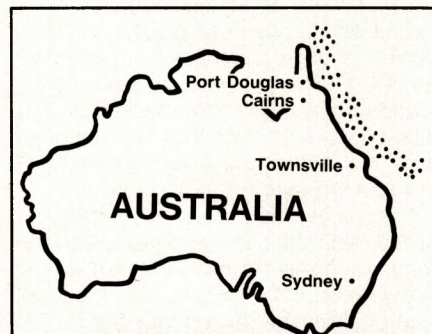
The *Aquanaut* is a fine example of Australian dive boat design and is regarded as a showcase vessel for the next generation of such craft. She is equipped with two onboard 11.5 cubic foot air compressors and carries 36 scuba tanks. Designed specifically for diving, the craft features storage space for dive gear bags directly under the passenger seats, a 14 foot wide stern platform, twin dive ladders and an external freshwater shower for after dive rinse-off. Scuba tanks are stored in rows behind the passenger seats for easy access. The craft also features a compact galley for onboard meals, 12 bunks for overnight cruises and two bathrooms. A dive skiff is stored on the roof and can be lowered quickly by power launch.

Coral Sea Diving Services is operating the *Aquanaut* basically as a day boat but is also scheduling longer overnight trips. The boat caters to both experienced divers and customers who are on its learn-to-dive program. The craft is equipped with both snorkeling equipment and scuba gear. Guests are divided into groups and assigned specific instructors depending on their underwater skills.

The *Aquanaut* visits a variety of coral reefs within a 35 mile radius of Port Douglas. Opal Reef is a popular destination that offers a view of mammoth *Tridacna* clams, plus a tour through shallow coral gardens. Norman Reef offers

an opportunity to dive a vertical drop-off and explore coral caves. Saxon Reef is an area well known for its soft coral gardens. The water temperature in this area of the Great Barrier Reef averages 80°F. Wetsuits are basically worn for protection and prolonged submersion.

As for extended overnight cruises, the *Aquanaut* runs north to Australia's world famous Cod Hole. Guests have an oppor-



The *Aquanaut* is headquartered at Coral Sea Diving Services, in the village of Port Douglas, on the Queensland coast, 40 miles north of Cairns.



Upper left: Brian Tweedie (in water) coaches a scuba student as he makes an entry. Above: The 56 foot *Aquanaut* can cruise at 24 knots with a full load of divers. Left: Qantas flies 747s direct to Cairns.

tunity to photograph and hand feed a colony of 11 to 15 giant potato cod, weighing 75 to 250 pounds each. This site is also the home of several six foot long moray eels that are equally tame and responsive to fish feeding.

Port Douglas is a picture book coastal village that has become popular with Australian visitors. The surrounding environment is quite rural and includes sugar cane plantations, rain forests and deserted beaches. There are several quaint hotels and excellent restaurants in the area. Land activities include rain forest tours, crocodile cruises, golf, beachcombing or a tour of Ben Cropp's Ship-

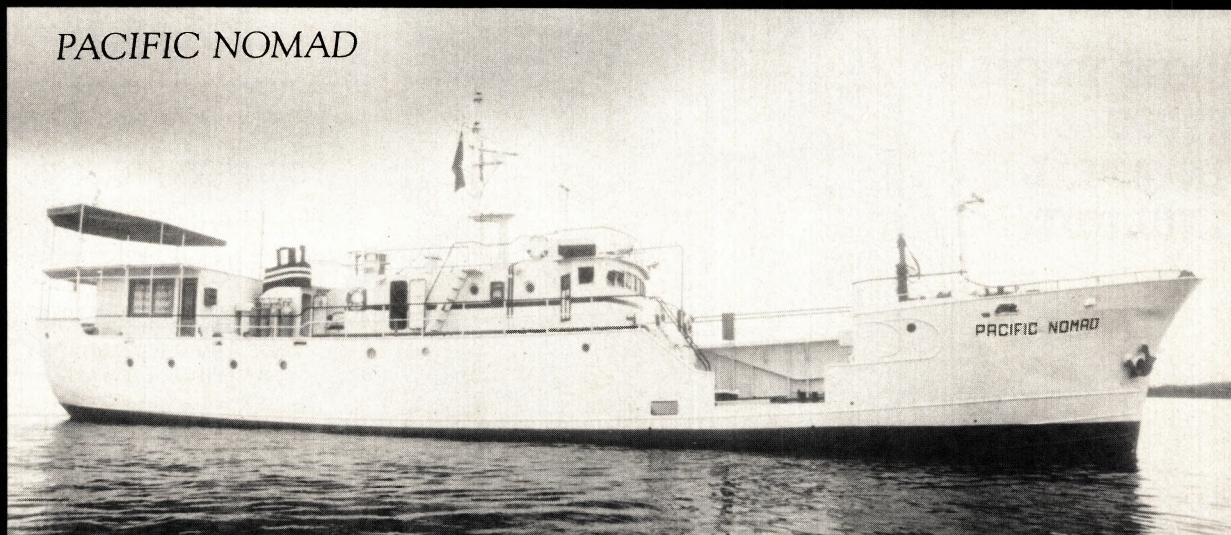
wreck Museum.

Port Douglas is approximately a one hour drive north of Cairns on the scenic Cook Highway. Visitors can make the trip by scheduled bus or rental car from Cairns. Qantas Airlines now operates jet service from the U.S. (San Francisco or Los Angeles) to Cairns, with a plane change in Honolulu.

For more information about M/V *Aquanaut* dive trips, contact Dive In Australia, 50 Francisco St., Suite 205, San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 421-5588, or write to Coral Sea Diving Services, Princess Wharf, P.O. Box 122, Port Douglas, 4871, Queensland, Australia. ✉

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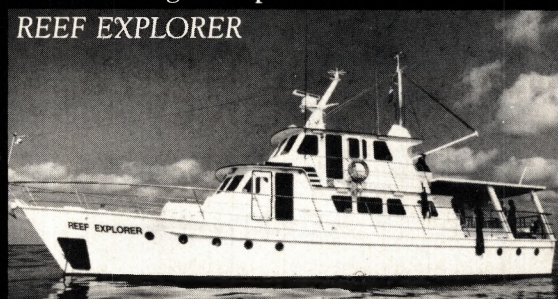
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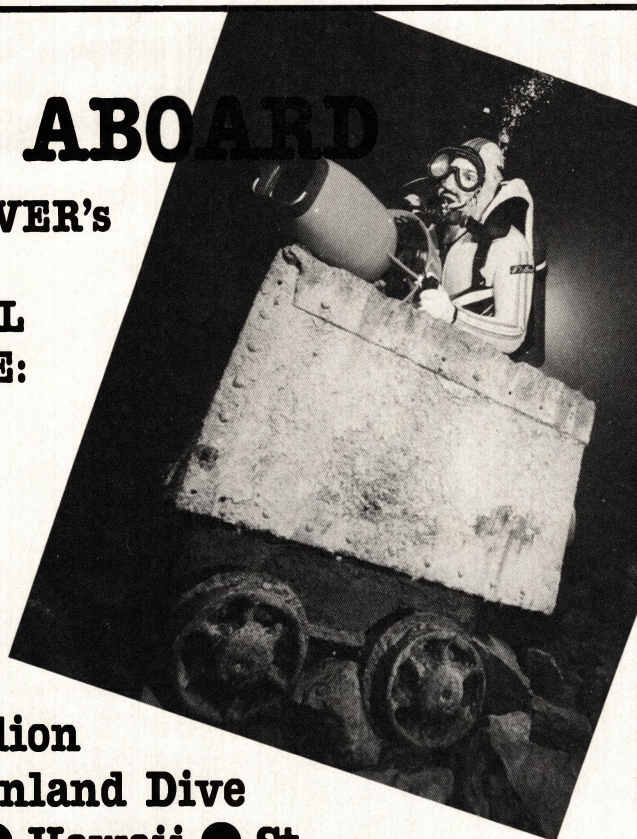
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**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BRUCE BOWKER**

Along the windward eastern shore of Bonaire there is a coral formation so unusual it is unlike any found on other reefs off this Caribbean island. For more than ten years the name of the site intrigued me, yet it took all of that time for me to finally dive in what is called the White Hole.

Unlike a blue hole, this strange coral formation has a bottom only 40 feet deep and of pure white sand. Almost all of Bonaire's east coast is a gradually sloping reef running from shore down to about 25 feet at a distance up to 150 yards offshore, where it then becomes about a 45 degree drop-off down to an average of 130 feet. Right in the very shallow part of the gradual slope is the White Hole. The area is about the size of a football field with one side a vertical wall filled with overhangs, caves and crevices. The other sides are 30 degree slopes, all of which form a huge bowl like reef with the rim nearly touching the surface.

What exactly caused this formation to occur is not known. No one knows how deep the sand is. At some time in the very distant past this may have been a blue hole. Nearby, on a spit of sandy land, are the ruins of a hotel project, called Sorobon, that was never finished. One reason the project went bankrupt was because an open pit filled with water. The contractors tried in vain to fill it with boulders, concrete and anything else they could find. Unfortunately, this pit was right where part of the main hotel structure was to be built. If this hole could not be filled and made safe, construction would have to end. And, that it did, in 1968.

A diver hired to inspect the pit and attempt to fill any cracks said it was riddled with cave openings and impossible to seal. Some divers have speculated this water hole may have been connected to the White Hole, making the theory of a blue hole feasible. Topside, Bonaire is peppered with caves, some of which have passages filled with water.

The east coast is a windward one with heavy surf constantly pounding the shoreline. The constant wind dies down

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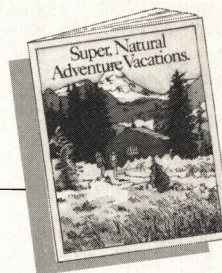


A diver at the White Hole observes a veritable convention of spiny lobster.

or changes direction long enough to make diving safe in the area only a few times per year. When this will occur cannot be predicted, although the last few months of the year seem the best bet. This is part of the reason it was more than ten years before both work and wind conditions coincided and allowed me to make a boat trip to the White Hole. It is almost impossible to make this dive by a

shore entry because the site is almost in the center of a barrier type reef that separates the Caribbean Sea from a large lagoon-like bay called Lac.

The day chosen to try to make it to the White Hole was almost dead calm with very clear skies. After an almost one hour boat ride from the pier at the Carib Inn, it was not difficult to locate the site. The brilliant sand bottom of the hole makes



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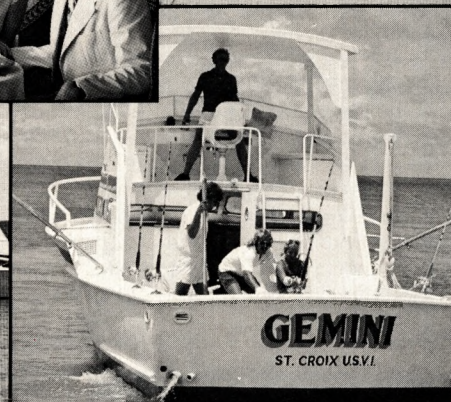
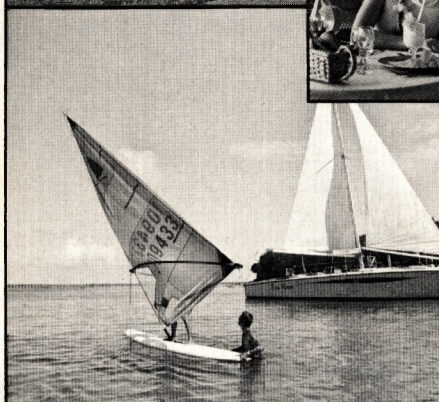
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WHITE HOLE

the water a blue color I will never forget. With the contrast of the dark reef around the bowl and the sand bottom looking as if it were only a few feet under the surface, the White Hole could be spotted long before the boat could safely anchor.

I had six other divers with me, all of whom had been to Bonaire many times before. We all hit the water at nearly the same time, anxious to be the first down. As with many dives, the first in gets the best chance to see some bigger creatures. This time, though, we all got to see the tarpon that frequent this reef. Although we only saw a portion of the big main school, it was exciting to see that many big fish. Some of Bonaire's better free divers, who had been to the hole on



calmer days, have estimated the main school contains to upwards of 100 fish.

A few minutes after seeing the tarpon we all descended along the slope to the white bottom. Slowly we continued our swim toward the other side. It was one of those dives when one might expect to see anything, and all of us kept looking in every direction. The vertical wall was already visible when we entered the water because the light reflected from the bottom and the clear, calm water allowed superb visibility.

The wall was covered in orange cup corals with crevices and small caves everywhere. A small nurse shark made its home in one cave while lobsters filled the others. A green moray stuck its head out of another hole. Small fish darted around everywhere. One opening, just large enough for a diver to squeeze in, was full of black margates. They darted around nervously when we shined our lights into their cave.

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We swam around the perimeter of the coral bowl, taking pictures and marveling at what a different place this was. I swam up the vertical wall and in toward the reef that separates the bay from the sea. It was like a giant aquarium. Large schools of mahogany snappers rested lazily under perfect examples of elkhorn coral. Sergeant majors, the ever present yellowtails, queen triggerfish and dozens of other species floated back and forth with a gentle surge washing over the rim.

Swimming back to the wall, I met the other divers. Since we all still had plenty of air left we decided to go across the White Hole, up the gentle slope at the other side where the boat was anchored and head toward the main drop-off. Another great surprise awaited us.

Because the White Hole is in the area where the channel leading into the bay exists, the reef here is a perfect place for sea creatures to live. Lac Bay has always

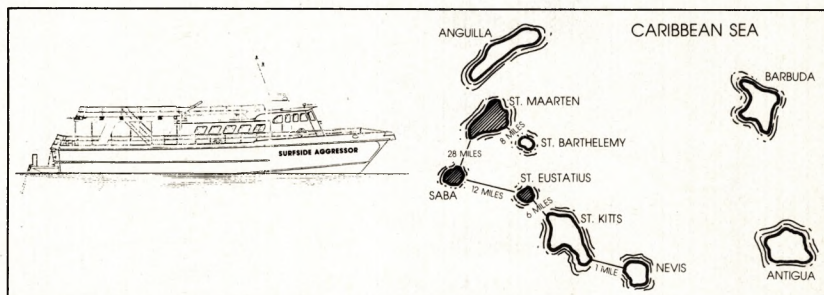


One of the many sea turtles the author encountered during the White Hole dive.

been known to marine scientists as a huge breeding ground and nursery for many types of animals, including turtles. As we swam to the drop-off, not less than 15 of these beautiful creatures were seen. They varied in size from small to quite large. A school of very large horse-eye jacks swam up to one diver and, having decided he was either safe or inedible, they continued on. Two nurse sharks, some very big gray snappers and more lobsters were also sighted.

The ride to and from the White Hole follows the coastline of Bonaire from the main harbor area all the way to Lac Bay. It is a pleasant sightseeing ride and we even had dolphins with us for part of the way back. The next day the easterly winds were back to their strong normal force, making a second day of diving impossible at the White Hole. It certainly will not be another ten years before I return to this unusual and beautiful area. >

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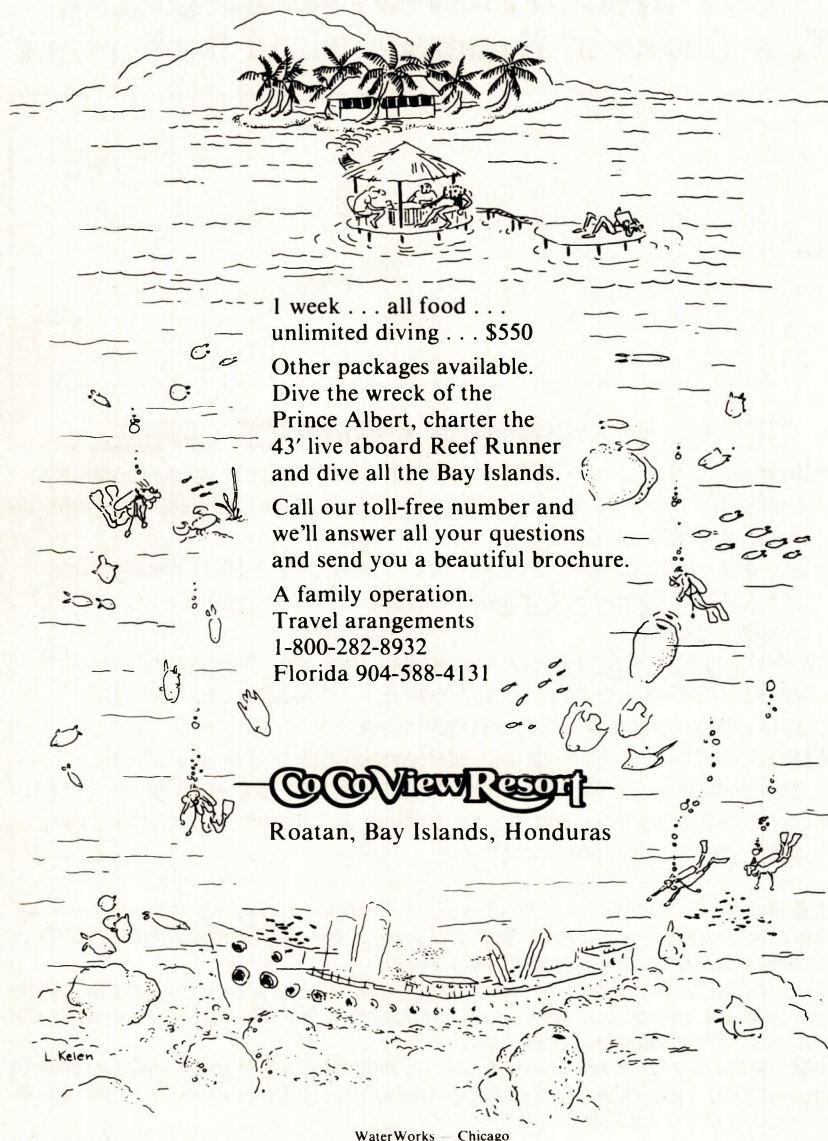
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Bob Soto's Diving staff recently celebrated its 1,000th consecutive day of diving off Grand Cayman island in the British West Indies. With nearly year-round perfect conditions, Bob Soto's maintained its daily schedule of servicing morning divers from March 1, 1984 through November 26, 1986 without a miss.

The staff is now setting its sights for the magic 2,000 mark, which should be crossed in 1989.

For information on Grand Cayman and Bob Soto's Diving Programs call (809) 949-2022 or write: Bob Soto's Diving, Ltd., P.O. Box 1801, Grand Cayman, BWI.

SAND DOLLAR DIVE AND PHOTO

Sand Dollar Condominiums and Beach Club has recently opened the newest dive operation on Bonaire—Sand Dollar Dive and Photo. Owned by Sylvia and Milton Weisberg and Andre Nahr, the new dive shop is on the water in front of the Sand Dollar Beach Club, affording easy access for divers. Dive gear remains in the shop and tanks are only six feet from the boat. There is also great beach diving just in front of your room. Sand Dollar Dive and Photo also has full photography service, including U/W video, PADI specialty courses, E-6 processing and more.

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The Egyptian Red Sea will be the destination of a 16 day diving and travel package offered by Eric Hanauer and Mia Tegner from July 16 through August 1. Participants will spend ten days diving the walls, reefs and shipwrecks of Sinai, based at Rolf Schmidt's Sharm-el-Sheikh dive center. The 50 foot vessel *Apuhara* will transport divers to such dive sites as Ras Muhammad and the Straits of Tiran. In addition, guests will visit the pyramids and Sphinx, the treasures of Tutankhamen and historical sites in Cairo. An optional Nile cruise will also be available.

The trip will be led by Eric Hanauer—photographer, author and instructor, who has spent three summers in the Red Sea. His wife, Dr. Mia Tegner, a marine biologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, will provide valuable insights on undersea ecology. Rolf Schmidt is the Red Sea's most experienced dive operator, with more than 15 years in Sinai. The cost of the package includes air fare, hotels, transfers, tours and diving.

For further information, contact Eric Hanauer, 345 University M-3, Costa Mesa, CA 92627; (714) 773-3316. 🐠

PIRATES POINT RESORT

Pirates Point Resort on Little Cayman is now owned and operated by gourmet chef/cookbook author Gladys Howard. Little Cayman now has cuisine that matches its diving. Pirates Point, formally a private residence, can accommodate 12 guests in separate cottages. The main pavilion houses the recently redecorated dining room, where the chef serves continental fare and Cayman specialties.

The resort is on the beach in Preston Bay facing the Cayman Trench. Equipped with new dive boats, new tanks and equipment, Pirates Point is completely remodeled and open for business.

Pirates Point offers customized videos of your favorite dives. To acquaint you with the amenities and famous diving of Little Cayman before your trip, Pirates Point has prepared a video that is yours to keep for \$10 (includes postage and handling) and can be ordered from Scott Simpson Associates, 701 West 177th, #43, New York, New York 10033; (212) 795-2846.

For more information contact: Pirates Point Resort, Ltd., Little Cayman, Cayman Islands, BWI; (809) 948-4210. 🐠

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10 TIPS FOR BETTER NIGHT DIVING

BY HARRY AVERILL

Night diving adds a whole new dimension to scuba. For many, it extends diving from a weekend to a week-long activity. At night you see creatures most divers miss. And, under the glow of artificial light, you see brilliant colors that do not appear in daylight.

Here are ten tips that can make night diving easier and more enjoyable. However, you can learn everything you need to know about night diving through advanced and specialty courses.

1. Pick the best spot possible. Look for minimal wave and current action, good visibility and shallow depths. Avoid surf entries and long surface swims. The best night dives take place from boats.

Dive the spot ahead of time—preferably the afternoon before. Learn the bottom contours and landmarks. Make certain the site lends itself to the activities you want as part of your night dive. These may include sightseeing, underwater photography, hunting or collecting.

2. Time your dive for optimum conditions. If you are new to night diving, plan to dive at dusk. This allows you to suit up and enter the water while it is still daylight. To see the greatest number of nocturnal creatures, dive as close to midnight as possible.

Remember you can night dive as readily at 4:00 am as you can at 8:00 pm. A dive is a great way to start the day. There is nothing like seeing the sun come up while underwater.

3. Organize your equipment for better night diving. Start by leaving nonessential equipment behind. This leaves you with less to keep track of.

Try out new or unfamiliar equipment during the day. Learn to operate all your equipment by touch. Take advantage of hose attachments and octopus holders so nothing dangles.

If diving in warm water, wear protective clothing. You are more likely to bump into things at night. Full length Lycra body suits provide excellent protection and look good, too. Also consider a lightweight, full length wetsuit. While the water

may be warm, the night air may not.

Suit up where there is plenty of light. Take advantage of your car's headlights, a lantern, streetlight or any other available source. Avoid using your dive light for suiting up. Save its batteries for underwater use.

4. Take plenty of light with you. You and your buddy should carry a minimum of three lights each.

Your primary light should be at least as bright as a six volt lantern battery light. The brighter it is, the more you will be able to see and enjoy. Attach your primary light with a wrist lanyard. Use a lanyard made partially or entirely from rubber. This allows you to remove it quickly should the need arise.

Your back-up light can be one of the newer three or four cell lights. These provide surprising brilliance in a convenient size. Their compactness and low cost make it feasible to carry more than one back-up light.



photo/Frank Palazzi

Have a good primary dive light as well as a backup, plus a chemical glow light.

Carry your back-ups in a sheath or holder or fasten them to your other gear. This will keep them from banging the bottom where they could be damaged.

Use alkaline batteries in your back-up lights. While not as bright as the rechargeables you may prefer in your primary light, they are more reliable.

Your third light will be a chemical glow light tied to your tank valve or taped to the tip of your snorkel. This will allow others to see you if your lights are out.

If circumstances force one diver on your team to be without a light, abort the dive. For safety, each diver needs at least one functioning light besides his/her chemical light. You can avoid the need to abort dives by carrying back-ups.

5. Make sure you can find your way.

As you explore your dive site during the day, note the compass bearings between major landmarks and your exit point. Notice also what natural navigation features can guide you to this point.

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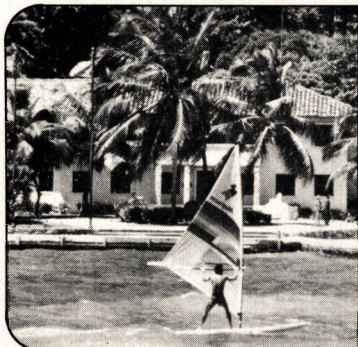
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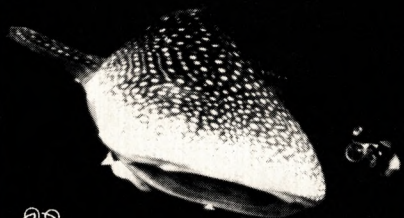
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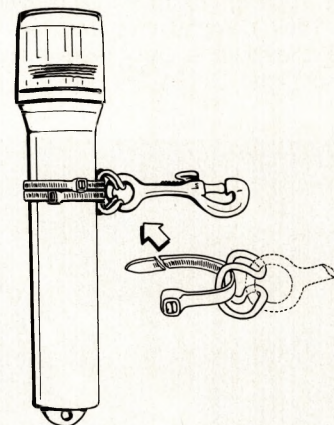
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NIGHT DIVING TIPS

If beach diving, align two lights on shore in the direction of your exit. These will give you the proper range on your exit point.

If diving from a boat, leave it as brightly illuminated as possible. Attach chemical lights to the ascent/descent line and boarding ladder or platform.

Consider using weighted chemical lights to leave a trail across the bottom. This makes it easy for you and other divers to find your way back. Arrange to have the last divers out pick up the lights. No one likes a litterbug.



Illustrations/courtesy PADI

Attach a clip to your backup light so it can be secured conveniently out of the way.

6. Cover less ground. Unless you are searching for game, there is no need to set distance records on a night dive. You will enjoy your dive more by moving slowly and observing small nocturnal creatures and their activities close-up. And, you will have a better idea of your location. Getting back to your exit point will be easier.

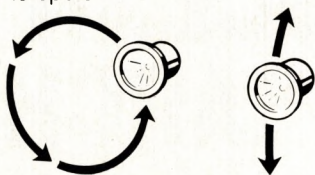
7. Turn your light off periodically. You will be surprised at how much you see. If diving in the ocean, try rubbing your gloves together or moving your arms in wide circles. This action agitates bioluminescent creatures known as dinoflagellates. The water will look like a miniature universe filled with hundreds of glowing stars.

8. Stay closer than usual to your buddy. It is easy to become separated at night. This is especially true when diving with a group; everyone looks the same.

If you do become separated, look up and around for no more than one minute. If you don't see each other's lights, ascend and meet on the surface. This is the same as daytime diving.

9. Use the proper U/W signals. Your light can be used to gain a buddy's attention or to give the OK signal.

To communicate other information, first gain your buddy's attention. Then shine your light on your hand while giving the appropriate signal. Do not shine your light in your buddy's eyes: All he/she will see is spots!

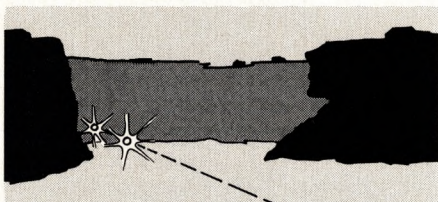


OK. All is well. Something is wrong.

Practice U/W light signals before diving.

Communicating with a slate requires two hands. Have your buddy shine his/her light on your slate while you write.

10. Include a post-dive activity in your plans. A warm fire or grill is a welcome thing to come back to. It may allow you to cook your catch or at least warm up over a cup of hot chocolate.



When diving from shore, align two lanterns to give the range to your exit point.

Have plenty of dry clothes ready. This will eliminate the need to rush home to warm up. Remaining for a little post-dive socializing will add to your enjoyment. It also allows you to exchange ideas and suggestions while they are fresh in your memory. These will improve the quality of future night dives.

NIGHT DIVING

What It is:

Night diving is any diving that takes place between dusk and dawn.

Why Divers Do It:

Night diving extends the time available for diving. It lets divers see creatures that only come out at night. Diving at night with artificial lights also lets divers see colors that are not present during the day.

Where Divers Do It:

Night diving can take place anywhere there is water. The best diving, however, is from boats with near-ideal conditions.

Equipment Needed:

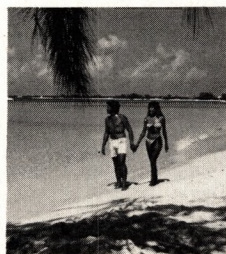
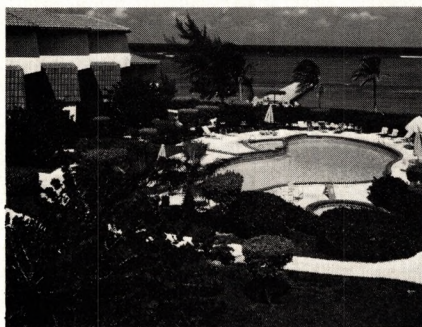
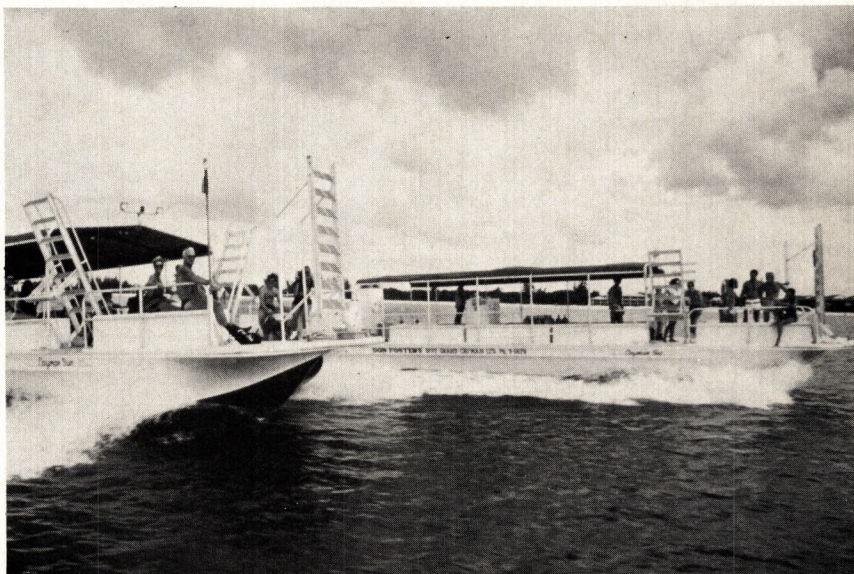
- 1 primary light per diver
- 1 or more back-up lights per diver
- 1 chemical light per diver
- 1 underwater compass per diver
- Illumination for suiting up
- Lights to mark exit points on shore
- Chemical lights to mark ascent/descent lines, etc.

Training Available:

An introduction to night diving techniques is provided in most advanced courses. Additional training is available through night diving specialty courses.

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Paul Tzimoulis, Skin Diver Magazine



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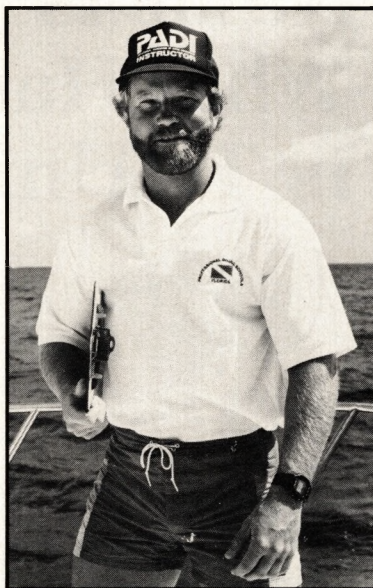
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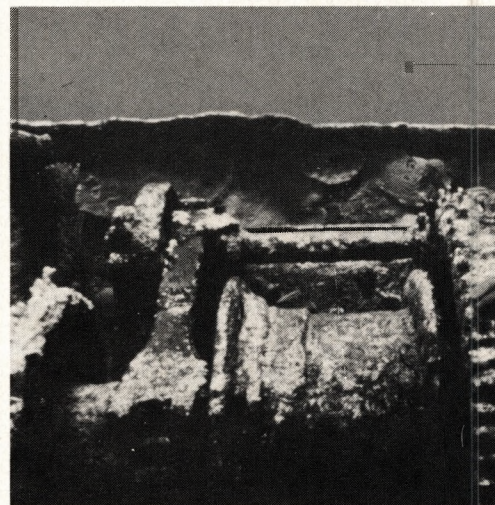


Photos Mark M. Lawrence

PROJECT OCEAN SEARCH

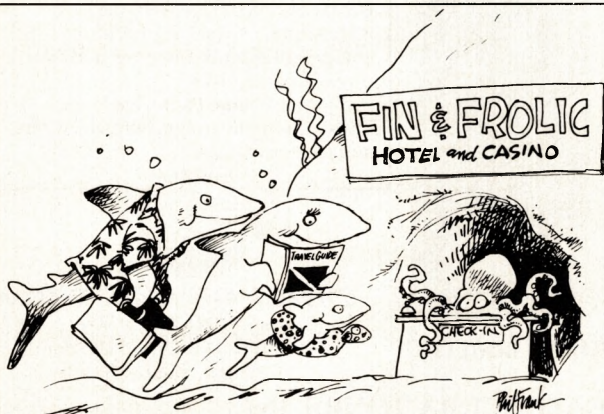
East Coast Wreck
Diver Joins Cousteau
Exploration Team

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY WILLIAM H. HUGHES



The POS expedition members made wreck

In his novel, *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville wrote, "Almost all men in their degree, sometime or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings toward the ocean with me." No organization can better attest to these words than the Cousteau Society. Scores of letters are received yearly from those who desire a chance to explore the world's oceans with the Cousteau team. Fourteen years ago, Jean-Michel Cousteau, son of Jacques-Yves, originated Project Ocean Search (POS) to help make the dreams of these would-be explorers come true. Annually since then,



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lucky individuals in limited numbers have had the opportunity to dive with and learn from members of the internationally renowned Cousteau team. In the summer of 1985 I was one of the fortunate few.

Since its conception, POS has investigated domestic locations such as Santa Catalina Island off California and Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. International destinations have also been areas of study, as POS has explored Wuvulu Island in the Bismarck Archipelago, Gulf of Honduras and Maupiti Island in French Polynesia. For the last five years however, Jean-Michel has utilized a small spot of ground in the British Virgin Islands. A visit to Moskito Island (named after Indians, not insects) is to know why.

Lush, with green tropical foliage, the island is laced with scalloped bays and fringed with talcum white beaches. Its



dives off Moskito Island in the BVI.

waters support a variety of remarkably rich and diverse marine communities. Just 20 yards offshore healthy coral reefs and turtle grass beds can be found. Deeper areas are endowed with sponges and soft corals in colors as vivid as a child's comic book. On my first exploration with just a mask, flippers and a snorkel, I discovered a cannon and an anchor! During the dives that followed, I saw not one beer can, soda bottle or flashbulb. This is indeed a special place.

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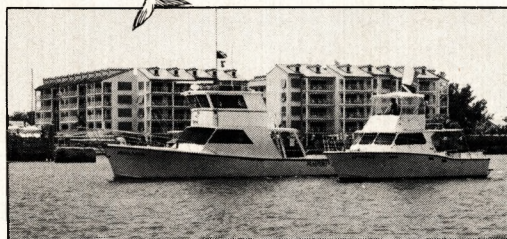
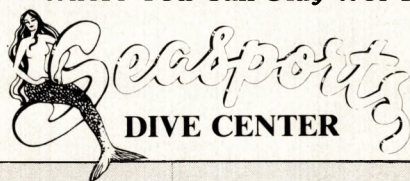
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PROJECT OCEAN SEARCH

as Drakes Anchorage. During most of the year, the facility caters to individuals escaping reality and winter storms. Each summer, through special arrangements, this paradise is placed at the disposal of Jean-Michel for POS.

Thanks to the POS staff, I reached the remote island without feeling as though I had run a decathlon. Upon arrival, bungalows were assigned and a brief orientation was presented by Richard Murphy. "Murph," as he is called by his friends, is the Cousteau Society's director of education. He has been with the society for 15 years and has always been intimately involved with POS. His opening comments made me feel both welcome and like a valuable asset to the team.

Dr. Murphy's overview of the next 12 days was overwhelming. We would be exposed to lectures on tropical ecology, fish behavior and symbiotic relationships of both sea and land. Audio/visual presentations would be made covering the history of diving, shark behavior and toxic marine species. A special guest appearance was planned by Bert Kilbride, who has located more than 130 ancient shipwrecks in the area. The group was further informed it would have the opportunity to help map a coral reef (an ongoing project) or study U/W photography with Nikon representative, Scott Frier. And, of course, we would make at least two dives per day. Jokingly, I asked how we would ever accomplish all this in just 12 days. Murph simply smiled and replied, "Don't plan on going home rested."

A typical day started at 6:00 am, cleaning and preparing cameras for the morning dives. A buffet-style breakfast was served at 7:00 am and the boats headed to the day's first dive at 8:00 am, sharp. Following each dive, Dr. Murphy brought up a collection of reef dwellers and delivered a brief lecture on each. After the specimens were carefully returned to the bottom, we returned to the base for lunch. The afternoons were used for lectures covering a host of topics and were sometimes delivered while we sat waist deep in a lagoon. Following a delicious dinner (none of us lost any weight during our stay), a movie or slide show was presented at the beautiful open air amphitheater. The planned activities generally ended around 9:00 pm. This left several hours to chat with Jean-Michel and his staff or perhaps escort a young lady on a moonlit beach.

No one was required to attend the lectures and presentations. Participants snorkel, take a hike or just lounge in the sun. Members of our group, though, seemed dedicated to absorbing as much of the unique experiences as possible. Tape recorders and VCRs were a common sight. Lectures frequently exceeded

time limits because of questions and discussions among group members.

Following eight days of intensive studies, even the most disciplined mind starts to wander. To combat this kind of mental fatigue, Jean-Michel and Dr. Murphy have organized unique adventures to remote reefs in the area. During my stay, we visited shipwrecks on Anegada's treacherous Horseshoe Reef. It is here that Bert Kilbride and his clan have located more than 130 shipwrecks.

Jean-Michel relies on Jim Kilbride to guide the expedition. Local legend has it that his father, Bert, gave him a regulator mouthpiece as a teething ring. When one sees him in the water, it is easy to believe. Horseshoe Reef is avoided like the plague by most pleasure craft in the area. Poorly charted, it still claims victims regularly. The reef, however, is Jim's backyard. He and his family grew up here, exploring wrecks and salvaging treasure.

An exciting day of diving on wrecks of both modern and ancient vintage fol-



Expeditioners studied marine ecology.

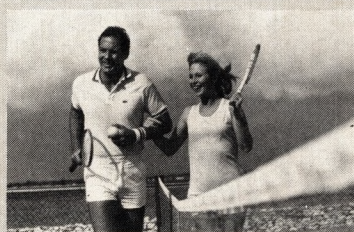
lowed. As evening started to fall, the expedition tied up at the small island of Anegada where we camped and delighted in a sumptuous seafood dinner. That evening the atmosphere came alive with the sounds of jubilant divers keeping cadence to a local reggae band. A beautiful metamorphosis had begun. The 35 strangers, from different towns and life experiences, were becoming friends.

The next morning, following breakfast, we broke camp and left to explore several more wrecks. Later in the afternoon, Jim asked if anyone would like to dive a virgin area of the reef. The consensus was a rousing yes! Following a ride through a maze of reefs and boilers, Jim dropped anchor on the outer edge of Horseshoe Reef. The area was loaded with outrageous growths of elkhorn coral. Fish were abundant, especially large barracuda. Jim was the last diver in the water and predictably stretched his tank of air forever. When he finally appeared at the divers' dock, he was smiling so broadly he dropped the regulator from between his teeth. As I helped him with his gear, he looked at me and said quietly, "I found a couple of cannons—another wreck." I longed for a chance to explore it, but my bottom time was expended. With regret, we weighed anchor and headed for Mosquito Island.

As POS moved into its last working day, many of us felt a sense of dread: A

(Continued on Page 142)

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TECHNIQUES FOR U/W ARCHAEOLOGY

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY HOWARD B. TOWER, JR.

Recovering archaeological resources depends on a marriage of diving skill and research. This occurs in the field—nature's classroom. This article outlines rules and guidelines, tested through 17 years of experience, that will make your diving for antiquities a success. There are two basic classifications of antiquities diving locations—sites adjacent to land and wrecks. Let's first discuss artifact recovery at sites adjacent to land.

SITES NEAR LAND

Your search for a particular fort, town or ferry has led to a river bank or lake



Old bottles, pipes, cannon balls, stirrup.

shore in the wilderness—now what? Since diving virgin sites is a gamble, you need to stack the odds in your favor. Nature has reclaimed that patch of ground civilized many generations ago. You must find the point of land adjacent to the water that was the focal point of human activity. Look for remnants of civilization; begin at the water's edge. If the water is tidal, search at low tide when possible. Look for pieces of brick, the most common sign. Red brick of the 18th and early 19th centuries was slightly larger than today's brick. It was handmade, crude and often had irregularities in color and texture. The edges and broken pieces will be worn smooth. Red brick made at the turn of this century will be more uniform, less worn and the size of today's brick. As you gain experience it will become easy to determine the age of brick—one of the great signposts of civilization.

Also note pieces of glass and their color. Black glass (actually dark brown or olive) is a sure sign of activity before 1865. With practice you can look at a fragment of this material and tell if the original bot-

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tle was made in 1740, 1780, 1830 or 1860. Aqua glass was widely used between 1870 and 1900 for the manufacture of medicine and food containers. Purple glass was actually clear glass made between 1895 and 1914.

Pieces of china, pottery and crockery are common signposts of human activity. Hairline cracks on china are a sure sign of age. However, specific dating is very difficult unless the manufacturer's mark or seal is visible. Pottery can best be dated if pieces of the mouth or handle of the container are found. The design of these items changed every 20 or 30 years.

Every antiquities diver should develop interpretive skill concerning the aforementioned objects. It takes time; there are no shortcuts. Read books on antique glass, china and pottery. Learn basic shapes and styles.

Most of these objects will be found at or near the water's edge, deposited by the washing action of rain and flood. They are an effective tool for estimating the periods of human activity.

Fragments of objects recovered from a bluff and adjacent creek in Georgia indicated the site was an Indian village from 1000 A.D. to 1400 A.D., possibly a Spanish mission in the 1600s, a small colonial settlement between 1734 and 1738 and later a British military post during the Revolutionary War. This same bluff was the location of a village/sawmill from 1850 to 1910. By correctly reading the signs, I knew where to dive. The result was the recovery of intact pieces representing the above periods of human activity.

Virtually all sites adjacent to the water had a dock or landing. Often these were very extensive. Pilings at, or just below, the water are generally all that remain. Docks along rivers were built next to, and parallel with, the shore. Bushes and plants will grow from the rotting stubs of these pilings, often disguising them. Orange Bluff, a sawmill and plantation site on the St. Marys River, has a double row of pilings extending 100 yards along the bank. We worked the bluff (where no docks were built) on several occasions—the river being at or near high tide. One day several friends and I planned a "clean up dive" at this site. The tide was low when we arrived. We strapped on our equipment and stepped into the water. Someone glanced downstream and shouted, "Look at those pilings." They were like giant brushes on end—bushes growing from the stubs like so many bristles. Hundreds of artifacts were recovered from this area.

If you are exploring a lakeside town the dock will appear as a large T with the crossbar out in the lake. Remember, artifacts found at dock sites will be concentrated from the edge of the pilings outward. Little will be found between pilings.

Towns and forts will always be built on high ground. The associated ferry, landing or dock will be on the adjacent low ground. With practice you can find the



A word for the wise: "enough."

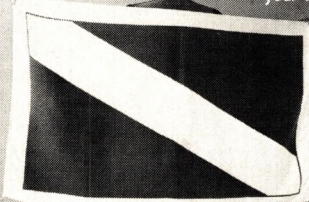
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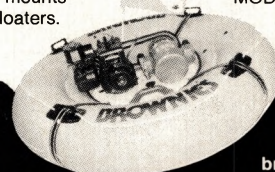


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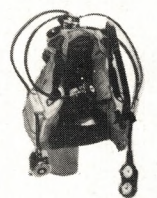
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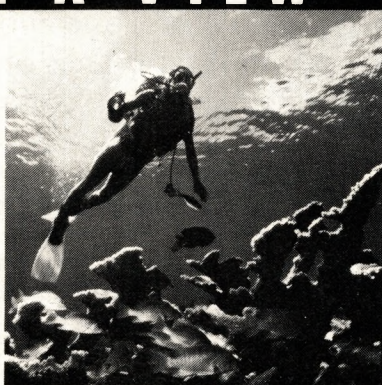
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EXPLORATION TECHNIQUES

road leading to this spot. The greatest concentration of artifacts found underwater will be here, not in front of the bluff or high ground. A classic case is the town site of Wannee on a high bluff overlooking the Suwannee River. We searched the river in front of the bluff and found next to nothing. By accident one diver worked upstream away from the bluff and stumbled into the landing. Objects recovered included a lever action rifle (caliber 32-40), several good antique bottles and other relics of the riverboat era.

Before you begin to dive try to determine the degree of erosion caused by the body of water. Careful study of a succession of old maps will indicate a radical change in a river or lake. Subtle changes are more difficult to perceive. If the river you are working has a limerock channel, believe me, it hasn't shifted one inch in 1,000 years. It is a good idea to interview old-timers living along a river as they often know how much the channel has shifted during recent decades. Otherwise, examine the river bank. If it is un-



Spanish eight reales—circa 18th century.

dercut and composed of sand or dirt, erosion is very active and could mean the channel has moved 100 feet, especially in a bend. If you know you are at a given site but can't find any of the signs mentioned in this article and the ground is soft sand or dirt, this is a strong indication the original site has washed away. The artifacts are buried and scattered under many feet of sand and mud in a shifting channel. The prospect of successful diving is almost nil. Rivers flowing through hard clay may shift a few feet each century. This will not affect your diving success. Remember erosion will occur principally in the bends. Erosion is not a factor at lake sites. Intercoastal waters may shift depending on the composition of the land and the frequency of storms.

There is a common view that objects

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thrown into a body of water will settle through the bottom until reaching bed-rock. Nothing is farther from the truth—with the exception of gold coins. The degree to which artifacts settle is dependent on their density relative to the composition of the channel bottom. For example, glass, pottery and china have nearly the same density (i.e., weight per cubic centimeter) as packed sand or clay. Therefore, if the channel bottom is composed of these elements, antique bottles, ceramic jugs and china will rest at, or even with, the surface of the bottom. When such artifacts are deeply buried in sand or clay the cause is a shifting channel bottom. Brick and ballast stone—signposts indicating quality artifacts may be in the vicinity—will also rest on top of a sand and clay bottom.

Iron objects, including cannon balls, will be found at, or within inches of, the surface when the medium is hard packed sand and clay. Iron or steel, when submerged in water (especially saltwater), chemically bonds itself to the surrounding elements, thus inhibiting settling.

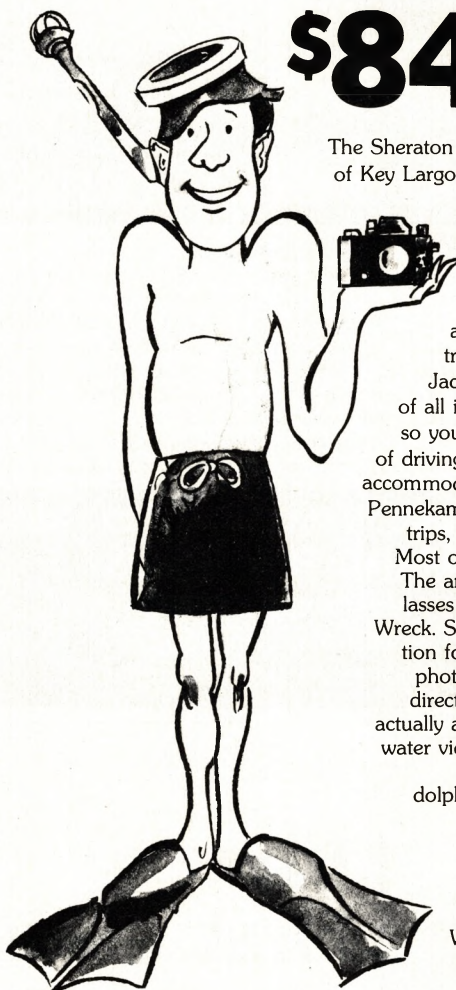
I worked a Civil War wreck site on a submerged, hard packed sandbar in the St. Johns River, Florida. The vessel had been removed. Objects recovered included 20 pound Parrett shells, 12 pound shot, grape shot, Minie balls, brass buttons and hundreds of iron spikes. All were found within 18 inches of the surface by probing the sand with metal rods. The objects had settled only a few inches in 108 years!

A site with a mud bottom has good and bad points. The good news is this: Antiquities of all types will be well preserved and remain where they fall. The difficulty is the relics you seek may be so deeply buried that recovery is impractical or just plain expensive. My first antiquities dives were at sites with mud bottoms—hotel docks in Lake Monroe near Sanford, Florida, and the St. Johns River, Florida. The consistency of the mud will determine your success. All relics quickly settle through soft, soupy mud. Glass, china and pottery will be found in tacky mud that has the consistency of semi-hard putty. Some metal objects may also be

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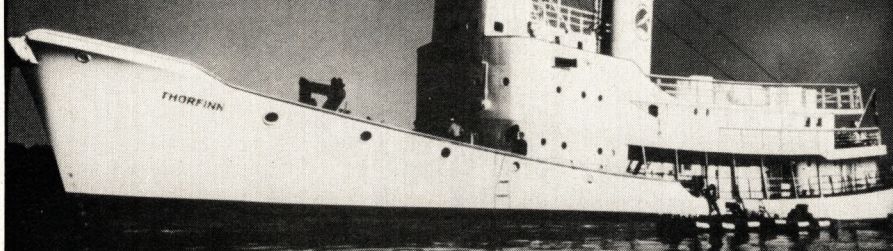
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found in this medium. However, if you are looking for heavy metal cannons, coins, etc., plan to work down until reaching hard mud of such consistency that it is difficult to press your finger into it.

When working a mud bottom the diver must first determine the depth where objects may be found. I just use my arm as a probe. If I can't feel dense mud in an arm's length I kiss the site good-bye. Unless you know there is gold under all that goo it is not worth the effort. Often less than 18 inches of soft mud covers the denser medium. I've made many good finds—objects more than a century old—by grope and feel. The key to successfully working a mud bottom is patience.

At the other end of the spectrum are rock bottom sites—what a joy to work! Objects of various periods of time will lie mingled together, concentrated in cracks and potholes. Many rivers in the Southeast have rock bottoms.

SHIPWRECKS

Shipwrecks are unique in themselves. They are far more complex to work than other sites and are difficult to locate, but always have great potential. However, any vessel sunk after 1860 in less than 30 feet of water has been the subject of at least one salvage attempt. The main target of early salvors was the ship's machinery, which could be reconditioned and sold. Recovery of valuable cargo was attempted when possible. The Army Corps of Engineers often issued contracts for the removal of wrecks considered hazardous to navigation. Removal does not mean the entire vessel was physically pulled from the water. Instead, the ship was removed down to a certain depth—generally 18 feet below the surface. In other words, the lower portion of the hull, including cargo and other artifacts, may still be intact. Contact the Corps of Engineers in your area and learn where records of salvage contracts are stored. Often they will provide information on the wreck you are researching.

Locating shipwrecks is no easy matter. Don't expect instant success; if it were simple everyone would be finding them. The keys are patience, determination and persistence. A variety of underwater metal detecting instruments are on the market. They cost between \$400 and \$20,000. Most people buy what their budget allows. Remember none of these instruments will spell S-H-I-P when passed over a target. If you buy one of these detectors get to know how it works before attempting to locate a wreck. When searching, use a grid pattern dense enough to allow the probe to pass



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 B.W.I.

over the target at least once. When I am looking for a vessel over 100 feet long I use a 50 foot grid. This allows my instrument probe to pass over the target twice. It is slow, tedious work but I find wrecks!

Let me give you a classic example of a poorly executed search. In 1974 three of us sought to locate the *Dai Chang*, a Navy Civil War gunboat, sunk January, 1865 in the Combahee River, South Carolina. The events surrounding the vessel's destruction are well documented. We had a magnetometer ordered but since the accounts of this vessel were so exact I was sure we could find it dragging an anchor. This effort failed. When our instrument arrived we quickly tested it and ran to the Combahee River where we dragged the probe for hours in a 400 yard long bend and got all kinds of strange readings. I spent hours underwater and did not find anything. We headed home believing the *Dai Chang* was buried under mud and marsh.

Where did we go wrong? First, if we had done in-depth research we would have learned the *Dai Chang* was completely removed in 1906. Second, if we understood our instrument we would have known that anytime the probe is not pulled in a straight line it will emit false readings. It just shows you have to get your act together to be successful.

Once a ship is found you will have to set up a plan to work it based on its condition and the conditions (depth, visibility, current, etc.) of the water. Each wreck is different. The best approach is to survey the vessel and set up a procedure based on methods outlined in Mendel Peterson's *History Under the Sea*, Peter Throckmorton's *Shipwrecks and Archaeology* or other books on underwater archaeology. String a baseline from bow to stern and attach numbered tags to the line every five feet. If visibility is poor, lower a five foot square made from angle iron to the wreck and align it with the tagged baseline. Work the wreck one square at a time and you will be assured of complete coverage.

If you are working in good visibility put a rope grid over the wreck or ballast pile and work it one square at a time. Remember that shipwrecks are not like Christmas trees with antiquities hanging on them like ornaments. The artifacts you seek are buried or covered within, or just outside of, the vessel. It takes a determined effort to successfully excavate or salvage a ship.

One last thought: Don't be in a rush to buy underwater metal detectors, dredges or lift bags. Gain experience first and tailor this equipment to specific needs, conditions and projects.

The methods set forth in this article have been used successfully in three states. Tailor them to your area and in ten years your home will be filled with treasure and museum quality artifacts. >

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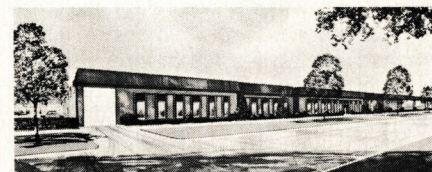
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DACOR EXPANSION

Dacor Corporation recently purchased the Biederman & Son building next door to its Northfield, Illinois factory—and connected the two. A total of 24,000 square feet of floor space was added, giving the company almost 80,000 square feet of



manufacturing and office space. The current expansion is the third the company has engaged in since establishing its headquarters in Northfield. The architect of the new expansion is Rudich/Pappageorge Ltd., Chicago.

AMERICAN LEISURE U/W HOLIDAYS COZUMEL

A telephone number listed in the February SDM for American Leisure Underwater Holidays Cozumel was incorrect. The correct nationwide toll free number is (800) 231-5804. The Texas toll free number is correct as previously listed: (800) 392-2380.

SCOUT PROGRAMS

All Explorers and Boy Scouts of high school age are invited to participate in summer programs in marine biology, coral reef ecology, scuba diving and sailing sponsored by Explorer Post 2 of Urbana, Illinois and its sponsor, the Institute for Environmental Exploration.

The Summer Marine Science Program is held in Key Largo, Florida and consists of four, two week sessions with a maximum of 13 students participating in each session. The dates are: June 13-25, June 27-July 9, July 11-23 and July 25-August 6. The instruction in scuba diving and coral reef ecology is offered in cooperation with John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Other activities have included snorkeling, windsurfing, field trips, beachcombing and a visit to Key West.

The Summer Sailing Program consists of seven days aboard a sailboat cruising among the Bahama Islands. All participants serve as the crew under a captain and first mate and learn about navigation, develop sailing skills and explore the tropical ocean. The number of sessions and dates have not yet been set.

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For sailing dates, costs of both programs and how to register, contact the Explorer Post 2, Institute for Environmental Exploration, P.O. Box 668, Urbana, IL 61801-0668; (217) 367-3768. ❧

TEKNA MOVE

Tekna has moved its world headquarters to a new 64,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility—more than doubling its former size.

The company's new address and phone numbers are: Tekna, 101 Twin Dolphin Drive, Redwood City, CA 94065; (415) 593-1410, (800) 225-2070 (customer service only). ❧

CO SPACE DIVING

The College of Oceaneering, in Los Angeles Harbor, has begun a two year contract to supply technical, advisory and standby support to McDonnell Douglas as that company uses the world's largest privately owned dive tank facility to stay abreast of modern space exploration. Built in 1980, the million gallon tank, 35



feet in depth, has the space and capacity to allow for maneuvers that will enhance man's understanding of basic motor functions and human performance in relation to space exploration.

The College of Oceaneering maintains a crew during testing and training that includes hyperbaric chamber operators, diver medics and consultants who can help plan the dives, equipment testing phases and provide additional technical knowledge about the effects of hyperbaric pressure on equipment and men. ❧

DIVING JOBS

The Ocean Corporation reports that diving contractors are in need of qualified entry level personnel. The Ocean Corporation is extending its placement services to past graduates of any Association of Commercial Diving Educators approved school. Those persons qualified and in need of employment are urged to call (800) 321-0298. TOC's vice president, Les Joiner, states, "Our location and day to day involvement with the Gulf of Mexico market put us in a position to help both the diver and contractor." ❧

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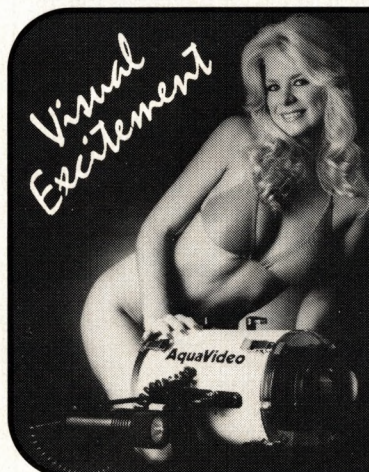


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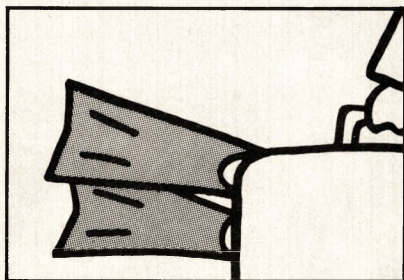
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SHERWOOD DISTRIBUTORSHIP

Sherwood Scuba, a division of Harsco Corporation, has extended its distributorship with Sherwood Gas Control, Inc., of Cambridge, Ontario. Formerly a Sherwood Distributor of LP and compressed gas equipment, Sherwood Gas Control, Inc. will now also distribute the entire line of Sherwood Scuba products in Canada.

Sherwood Gas Control, Inc. may be contacted at 543 Conastoga Boulevard, Unit 14, Cambridge, Ontario, N1R 6T4 Canada; (519) 740-1210 or toll free (anywhere in Canada) (800) 265-3583.

David D. Nicholson has been appointed scuba products manager of Sherwood Scuba. Nicholson comes to Sherwood with an extensive and diversified diving background. He worked for many years as manager of Bob Soto's Diving on Grand Cayman and was a founding partner of Sunset Divers, also on Grand Cayman.

BERRY SALE

Berry Scuba will hold its second annual April Super Sale the same weekend as Our World-Underwater, April 24-25. The sale will feature special savings on many name brands.

Berry Scuba will also have a booth at Our World-Underwater with discount sales, a round trip shuttle bus between the show and its Chicago facility, and numerous manufacturers' representatives on hand.

Our World-Underwater will be held at the O'Hare Hyatt Hotel, only one mile from O'Hare Airport. The O'Hare Hyatt offers free shuttle service from the airport. Show dates are April 24-26.

SPARE AIR

Spare Air, the miniature scuba system, is being upgraded by its manufacturer, Submersible Systems Incorporated. The system will be standardized with a 1.7 cubic foot aluminum tank and a silicone mouthpiece. A redundant scuba system, Spare Air is used by recreational, commercial and military divers as a backup system and for quick dives when donning a full system is cumbersome and unnecessary. The compressed air system, 13.5 inches long and two inches in diameter, weighs 22 ounces and is neutrally buoyant in water. With regulator, mouthpiece and pressure indicator built-in, Spare Air delivers about 30 full breaths at sea level and refills easily.

MCNETT MOVE

McNett Corporation, producer of Aqua-seal products and accessories for water-sports, has moved. The new McNett Corporation executive offices and production facilities have been completed, allowing



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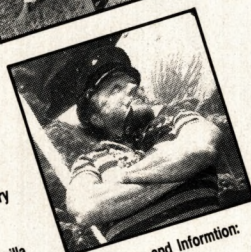


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for several expansion projects including new product development.

A new toll free order number has been established: (800) 221-7325(SEAL); in Washington and Alaska call (206) 671-2227. The new corporate offices are at 1405 Fraser Street, P.O. Box 996, Bellingham, WA 98227. 🌿

IKELITE REPS

Ikelite Underwater Systems has appointed Bruce and Sue Longman as Mid-



west sales representatives for the following states: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

For more information contact Ikelite Underwater Systems, P.O. Box 88100, Indianapolis, IN 46208; (317) 923-4523. 🌿

NO CMAS/PADI AGREEMENT

There have been articles in several diving magazines that give the impression agreements have been made between CMAS and PADI. This is not true. Some organizations have made individual arrangements with PADI representatives/agencies, but these were not made on behalf of CMAS. 🌿

FISHER PHOTO CONTEST

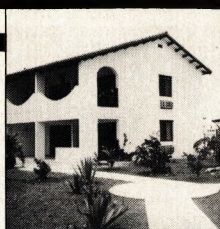
Fisher Research Laboratory is hosting a contest for the best photo of a Fisher land or underwater metal detector in use. First prize will be a Model 1265-X metal detector. Two runner-ups will each receive a Model 1210-X metal detector and ten honorable mentions will receive stereo headphones.

Entry is free, however, no more than three photos will be accepted from each entrant. For complete contest rules write to: Fisher Research Laboratory, Dept. SD, 1005 I Street, Los Banos, California, 93635-4398. 🌿

MERRIMACK AQUATICS

Lowell Scuba Center of Lowell, Massachusetts has moved to a new location and changed its name to Merrimack Aquatics. The new store is directly off Route 495 in Methuen, Massachusetts. The move will allow further expansion including the addition of an indoor pool.

The new address is Merrimack Aquatics, 171 Merrimack Street, Methuen, MA 01844; (617) 688-6566. 🌿



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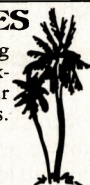
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For information on complete packages, registration and requirements, contact Walter Finn at Travelport (800) 247-5406 (nationwide), (800) 342-7046 (in Iowa) or (515) 278-9100 in Des Moines, Iowa.

TAYLOR/HENDERSON

Henderson Aquatics, Inc. has appointed Steve Taylor area sales manager for the Pacific Northwest territory. Henderson manufactures a full line of diving apparel in several styles and many colors.

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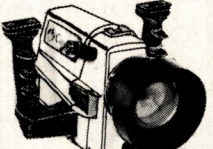
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SEARCH AND RECOVERY TEAM INFO NEEDED

Scuba instructor/Ohio State Trooper Timothy Patton is preparing an article for Ohio Trooper Magazine on search and recovery and law enforcement. Patton is asking search and recovery teams to provide information on their operations such as: history, training methods, vital equipment used, statistics on recovery operations (most important), copies of forms used during operations, the team's level of certification and type (i.e. YMCA, PADI, NAUI, SSI, NASDS, etc.), and any additional information deemed helpful.

Please send information to Timothy Patton, c/o T.J. Sport Divers, 7562 Townshieline Road, Waynesville, Ohio 45068 or call (513) 897-7288.

HILTZ/NORTH COUNTRY SCUBA

North Country Scuba & Windsurfing Inc. has added Donna Hiltz to its professional staff. She has considerable experience in underwater photography and will be working to increase the awareness and education of divers in the use of underwater photography equipment. She will be teaching locally as well as be part of the company's travel adventure trip programs all over the world.

Hiltz can be contacted at North Country Scuba & Windsurfing, Inc., 57 Elm Street, Laconia, New Hampshire 03246; (603) 524-8606.

PROJECT OCEAN SEARCH

(Continued from Page 127)

great adventure would soon be over. I decided to savor each moment of this final day and thoroughly enjoyed the morning dive and a picnic lunch at Hon-eymoon Beach. The afternoon was rounded off with windsurfing and smurfing. A brainchild of Jean-Michel, smurfing consists of being pulled on a piece of rope behind a fast moving inflatable. That evening a special dinner was served, followed by a festive party.

The following morning, emotions ran high as friends said their final goodbyes and departed. Seldom affected by such follies, even this stoical East Coast wreck diver admits to shedding a few tears. Jean-Michel summed up my feelings: "POS is really a place where something wonderful happens among people. . . . Soon we speak the same language and we all have something to offer. At the human level, that is pretty much what POS is all about."

If you would like an opportunity to experience the magic of POS, read the Calypso Log for details. You can subscribe to the publication by sending \$15 to the Cousteau Society at 930 West 21st Street, Norfolk, VA 23517.

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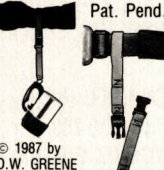
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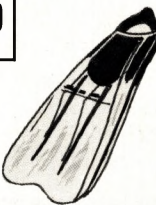
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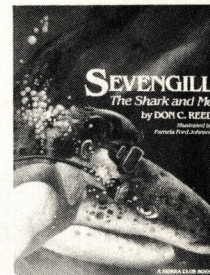


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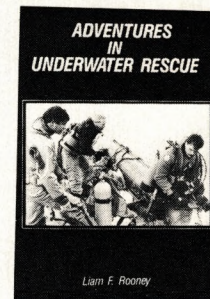


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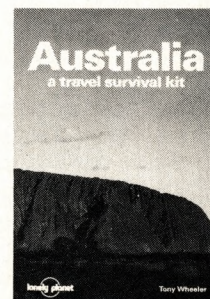
Divers Bookshelf



Sevengill: the Shark and Me—By Don C. Reed, with illustrations by Pamela Ford Johnson, this book describes Reed's experiences with a sevengill shark at Marine World/Africa USA. \$11.95 + \$2.50 ship. Sierra Club Books, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109.



Adventures in Underwater Rescue—Written by Liam F. Rooney, this book describes U/W rescue/search team efforts after a variety of boat, airplane and other disasters. \$9.95 plus \$1.95 shipping. North Forty Press, 305 West Magnolia, Suite 103, Fort Collins, CO 80521.



Australia: A Travel Survival Kit—This fourth edition by Tony Wheeler covers each of the seven Australian states in detail—city maps, sights and transportation. It even has a glossary of Aussie terms. \$14.95. Lonely Planet Pubs., 1555D Park Ave., Emeryville, CA 94608.



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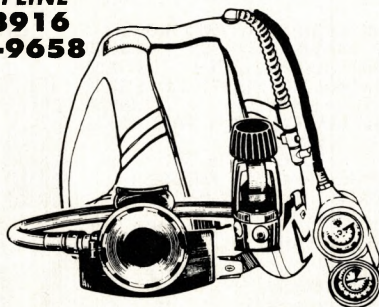
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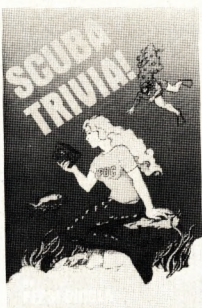
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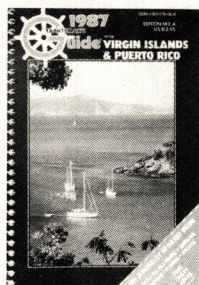
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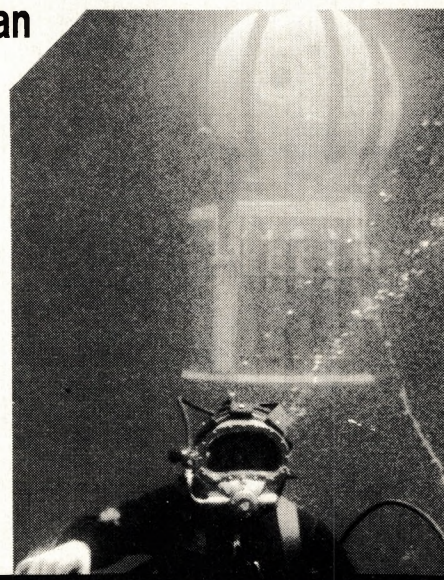
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AQUATICS

DAMSELFISH LANGUAGE

After listening to damselfish "talking" for 15 years, Dr. Arthur Myrberg has learned how to talk back. Now, he says, he can even control some of their behavior by chirping at them in their own language. He demonstrated this ability recently, making chirping sounds at a male damselfish through the glass of an aquarium on the campus of the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. The fish responded by swooping up and down in a typical bit of courtship behavior. It acted as if the chirps had come from another fish.

"You've seen something almost incredible," Myrberg said. "Someone controlling the behavior of a fish by producing a sound from the outside."

Most fishes make sounds. But Myrberg, a professor of marine biology, is the first to prove these sounds have specific meanings and to show what those meanings are.

"What this suggests is that we may be able to understand, predict and perhaps even control the behavior of more useful or commercially valuable species—not just for human use, but also for the species' own good," Myrberg says. Thus far, he has learned only the language of the small, reef dwelling, bicolor damselfish.

"If we can understand the function of the sounds of fishes, we might be able to control the behavior of the species—the way we play recordings of starlings' alarm calls near airports to keep the birds away from airplane flight paths," he says.

Practical applications are easy to imagine. They range from the possibility of summoning fish to waiting fishermen, warning fish of environmental dangers and using fish "talk" to mask the sound of submarine military operations.

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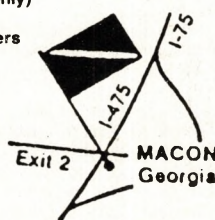
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4339 A Ocean Dr., Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, FL 33308	(STAY WET)
PADI 5 Star Facility, air, sales, svcs., rentals, dive charters, beach diving. All levels of cert. Priv. & Group lessons.	
CRYSTAL LODGE MOTEL & DIVE CENTER Dive Shop	904/795-6798
U.S. 19 N., P.O. Box 456, Crystal River, FL 32629	Motel 795-3171
Manatee & spring diving, boats, equipment rental.	
Heated pool, seafood, bar, rooms at low prices.	
DIVE MIAMI	Reservations:
"Gold Diver II" Custom Dive Boat	305/672-DIVE
30 min. to Miami's 20 wrecks & reefs	800/325-1337-at
U/W photography, PADI instruction.	tone dial "Dive"
DIVER'S DEN	
12614 N. Kendall Dr., Miami, FL 33186	305/595-DIVE
8280 State Rd. 84, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33324	305/473-9499
PADI 5 Star instruction, sales, service, rentals, trips, air, photo.	

DIVER'S DEN/PNEUMATIC SYSTEMS, INC.	FL 904/871-4777
4720 E. Bus Hwy. 98, Panama City, FL 32404	800/272-4777
Sales, rentals, service, fast charter boats, 6-15 passengers.	
Instr. NAUI, PADI. Compressor sales, service, maint., overhaul.	
DIVERS UNLIMITED	305/981-0156
6023 Hollywood Bl., Hollywood, FL 33024	
Awarded #1 training facil. by PADI. All brands, whsl./rtl., daily boat trips, repair, rental, classes, travel. 5 Star PADI IDC training facility.	
DIVERS UNLIMITED/FORT LAUDERDALE	305/524-4862
440 Seabreeze Bl., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316	
Daily boat trips, training dives, classes, retail—all brands, leisure-wear, rentals. Packages w/Days Inn. 5 Star PADI training facility.	
DIXIE DIVERS	
Of Ft. Pierce, 1717 S. U.S. 1, FL 33450	305/461-4488
Of Stuart, 1843 S.E. Federal Hwy., FL 33494	305/283-5588
PADI 5 Star IDC facility. Open 7 days, full service.	
FANTASEA SCUBA HEADQUARTERS	904/837-0732
P.O. Box 5498, #1 Hwy. 98, Destin, FL 32541	904/837-6943
PADI 5 Star instructor Development Center, D.V.I. resort, sales & service, gulf charters, instruction, rental, air, travel.	
FORCE-E, 1399 N. Military Trl., W. Palm Bch., FL	305/471-2676
877 E. Palmetto Pk. Rd., Boca Raton, FL	305/368-0555
2700 E. Atlantic Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL	305/943-3483
2104 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	305/735-6227
GINNIE SPRINGS, INC.	904/454-2202
Rt. 1, P.O. Box 153, High Springs, FL 32643	800/874-8571
Six 72" clear blue springs, camping, canoeing.	
Complete resort dive facility. Cavern instruction.	
GOLD COAST CHARTERS, INC.	305/842-6356
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Palm Beach Custom diving 7 days a week. Reefs & Wrecks	
We dive YOUR selected sight! 2 USCG certified dive boats.	
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2315 Caroma Lane, West Palm Beach, FL 33406	
Palm Beach daily reef & wreck dives, pro charters, Bahama boat trips. 2 new USCG 38' & 41' cust. dv. boats.	
HYDROSPACE DIVE SHOP	800/874-3483
3605-A Thomas Dr., Panama City Beach, FL 32407	904/234-9463
The Gulf Coasts' largest and most experienced dive service.	
5 boats 46', 42', 40', 24'. Full service facility.	
JIM HOLLIS' RIVER RENDEZVOUS	US 800/247-3373
Route 2, Box 60, Mayo, Florida 32066	FL 800/537-3373
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Complete master diver program. PADI distinguished service award. Instr., sales, service, air, photo, trips. Widest selection.	
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MANATEE HEADQUARTERS/7 RIVERS INN	904/795-2776
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Dive tours & brand new motel. \$43.43 p.p. dbl. & \$54.70 single.	
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deck and air sta. at Divers Giant Spring. Golf, tennis, 150 rooms.	
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TALLEY'S PRO DIVE	904/795-2776
P.O. Box 124, Crystal River, Florida 32629	
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2485 N.E. Dixie Hwy., Jensen Beach, FL 33457	
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PADI instruction, air, sales, rentals, repairs, trips.	
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AMERICAN DIVING HEADQUARTERS, INC.	305/451-0037
Rt. #1, P.O. Box 1274-B, Key Largo, FL 33037	
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Private deep harbor & ramp on Atlantic. A#1 rooms and effs.	
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BIG PINE SEA CENTER DIVE SHOP	305/872-2319
P.O. Box 515, MM 29.5 US#1, Big Pine Key, FL 33043	
Dive Looe Key, #1 Reef in FL. Keys, full service shop.	
Dive/lodging packages, custom boats.	
BUDDY'S DIVE SHOP	Natl. 800/223-4707; FL 800/367-4707
P.O. Box 409, Islamorada, FL 33036 MM 79.5	305/664-4707
Dv. aboard our 40' 'Scuba Safari' & 34' 'Free 'n Clear'. Full! 1/2 day trips to Alligator Reef, Cannabis Cruiser & Coral Gardens. Pkgs. avail.	
CAPTAIN CHAMBERS CHARTERS	305/451-1805
P.O. Box 2258, Key Largo, FL 33037 MM 100	Dive Pennekamp
31' cst. boat w/sundk., 6 max. Guide svcs., U/W cam., 1 trip daily, brunch served, cust. dv. pkgs. avail. Rec. by Undercurrent 3/82.	
CAPT. CORKY'S DIVERS' WORLD of Key Largo, Inc.	305/451-3200
P.O. Box 1663, Key Largo, FL 33037 MM 99.5 U.S. 1 past Wendy's Bahamas/Pennekamp, U/W video rental, snkl. w/dolphins, PADI instr., grp. rates, dive, snkl., sail, shell collect, spearfish. Best pkg. rates!	
CAPT. CRAIG'S CHARTERS	305/451-0128
47 Shoreland Dr., Key Largo, FL 33037 (MM 103)(Hideout Restnt.)	
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Live-aboard vessel, pick up and deliver at Miami Airport.	
CAPT. GREG'S SCUBA-DO	305/451-3446
P.O. Box 2237, Key Largo, FL 33037 MM 100 @ 100 Marina	
Dive Pennekamp, 34' Boat, 6 max. No crowds. Personal Service. Combin. Dive & Fish Trips Avail. Pkg. Rates.	
CAPT. SLATE'S ATLANTIS DIVE CENTER	800/331-DIVE
51 Garden Cove Dr., Key Largo, FL 33037 MM 106.5	305/451-1325
Dive Pennekamp on 1 of 4 cust. boats. NAUI, YMCA, PADI, CMAS.	
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CORAL LAGOON RESORT AT THE DIVING SITE	305/289-0121
Middle Keys, MM 53, 12399 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, FL 33050	
Waterfront efficiency cottages, dockage, pool, tennis, bikes.	
PADI dive shop, lessons, 3 boats, groups, spring/fall dive pkgs.	
DIVE KEY WEST	305/296-3661
"Carol J", P.O. Box 2842, Key West, FL 33045	
Disc. room pkg. & grp. rates. Max. 6 divers.	
Lobster diving & spearfishing, rentals & air.	
FLORIDA KEYS DIVE CENTER	305/852-4599
P.O. Box 391, Tavernier, FL 33070	6 pass. dive boats
5-STAR facility & dive charters, 4 day instr. & specialties.	
Reefs, wrecks, spearfish, Pennekamp & more.	
GOLDEN KEY MOTEL	305/664-4418
U.S. Rt. 1, P.O. Box 710, Islamorada, FL 33036 MM 81	
Free dockage & boat ramp, waterfront cottage, rooms with stove & refrigerator, picnic & barbeque area.	
HALL'S DIVING CENTER & RESORT	800/331-4255
1688 Overseas Hwy., Marathon, Fla. Keys 33050(in FL)	305/743-5929
Beautiful reef & wreck diving trips-Largest store & instruction.	
facility in the Keys—motel/condo diving packages arranged.	
HAWK'S CAY RESORT & MARINA	US 800/327-7775
MM 61, Marathon, FL 33050	FL 800/432-2242
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HOLIDAY ISLE DIVE CENTER	305/664-4145
P.O. Box 482, Islamorada, FL 33036 MM 84.5	FL 800/432-2875
All new "Wreck Diving"	US 800/327-7070
All new 22 passenger dive boat.	
KELLY'S MOTEL and MARINA	305/451-1622
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Tennis, pool, dockage. Close to all dive shops & boat rentals from \$200 per week.	
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Great diving, fishing, sailing. Special summer rates.

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On the ocean: Molasses, French & Conch Reefs at your front door.
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LOOE KEY RESORT & MARINA 305/872-2215
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Daily trips aboard 2 fastest, most comfortable boats in Hawaii. Most personable staff. Maui's only PADI 5 Star.

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Come as friends, leave as family!

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I Learned About Diving From That

Adrift In Baja

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

Conditions were absolutely superb as we loaded the skiff. There were no clouds in the sky and we were enjoying a moderate westerly breeze. The Pacific was iridescent blue. From the stern of the *Baja Explorador* I could see details on the bottom some 120 plus feet below.

We were anchored at San Benedicto Island, approximately 220 miles south of land's end at the southern tip of Mexico's Baja Peninsula. San Benedicto is rarely dived because of her remote, exposed location. And, we had not been disappointed. Howard Hall and I had enjoyed some exceptional dives, having handfed a number of large diamond stingrays, filmed manta rays, sharks, dolphins, turtles, amberjack and a variety of beautiful reef fishes.

This dive was to be the last of our trip and I wanted it to be one I'd remember. Once again, the waters of San Benedicto would not disappoint me. We decided to dive a wash rock off the northeast point of the island. The dive site was about a 30 minute skiff ride from the *Explorador*. Along the way I noticed the wind had picked up, but it was still out of the west, and I never gave it another thought.

As soon as the skiff stopped, Howard and I were over the side. The first thing we did was take some bait down in a goodie bag and anchor it to the reef to attract some stingrays. During the descent I noticed a slight surface current, but it dissipated at about 20 feet.

Howard and I placed the bait and then moved off to the side where we waited quietly. After a few minutes we spotted three large diamond stingrays milling around on the reef below. We decided to drop down and see if we could feed them. We did, and then coerced them up onto a shallow ledge where we continued to pose with the rays for each other. After about 35 minutes we were running low on air and bottom time and it was time to end our dive. During our ascent a weight that had been used to help secure the bait bag came free and dropped to the bottom. Howard dived down to retrieve it. I was hanging in midwater waiting for him to catch up when out of nowhere came a pair of manta rays. I looked at Howard to see if he had spotted the rays. He had, so off we went for one last moment with those majestic creatures.

Before swimming after the rays, I glanced up to see if I was below the skiff. No problem, it was directly to the west about 20 yards away. However, in my excitement I neglected the current, which had picked up considerably. Howard and I swam with the mantas until we were nearly out of air, then surfaced.

As soon as we hit the surface I realized the flat glass of early morning had vanished with the rising winds. Surface conditions made being on top of the water uncomfortable to say the least. I remember thinking I would only have to be in the surface chop for a couple of minutes until Miguel, our skiff driver, spotted us. Little did I know. Howard and I saw the skiff and yelled to Miguel. He did not react. We yelled again and got the same result. By then I saw we were losing ground in our attempt to swim back to the skiff as the wind had kicked up the surface current to a strength that was more than we could overcome.

We also realized the wind was blowing into our faces: No matter how loudly we yelled, Miguel was not going to be able to hear us. By that time we had drifted well beyond the ex-



posed part of the wash rock and the nearest land was the eastern tip of the island—at least one-half mile away. To reach the island we would have to navigate across the steadily building current. I wasn't at all sure we could make it.

Having dived with Miguel all week, I knew he would be aware we had to be nearing the end of our dive. As I rose on the crest of the now white capping waves to signal him, I could, in fact, see him searching for us. Relieved, I

thought to myself, "Thank goodness this is over. I'll be smarter next time." I waited a few minutes for Miguel to drive the skiff to us, but he did not. Whenever I could, I would get up on top of a wave. I could see the skiff going around in tight circles near the wash rock. I could see Miguel looking right at me, but not reacting. His hand was shading his eyes, but he continued to miss me. I turned to say something to Howard and was suddenly blinded by the intense glare from the reflection of the sun. Instantly I realized that even though Miguel was looking right at us, he could not see us because of the glare. As I turned back toward the skiff, I saw Miguel throw the anchor over the side.

At that moment I understood the combination of wind, current and glare had created a situation for which I was totally unprepared. I suddenly experienced that spine tingling sensation that says: "You blew it. Whatever happens you deserve it." In my mind's eye I envisioned a world map. I knew if Howard and I weren't able to swim to the island, the next point of land was mainland Mexico, at least 200 miles away. I had put myself in a situation where either I was going to be able to reach the island because I was lucky or I was going to drift in the open sea for the rest of my life. No matter how short that life proved to be, it was going to be several hours longer than I cared for.

By that time I had no idea where Howard was. We had gotten separated in the chop and I did not know if he was upwind or downwind from me. I spun around a few times and in case Howard was downwind, I began to yell that I was heading for the island.

As I headed toward the beach I discovered reaching it was going to be easier than I had expected. The point of the island extended farther out than I had realized. But I also knew that I was going to be able to reach the island simply because I was lucky.

Obviously we survived the dive, even though I got crushed by a set of large breakers as I reached the island after a long and tiring swim. After an hour or so Miguel spotted us on the beach and picked us up. Once I got back to the boat I sat down and had a long conversation with a humbled old pro—myself. I sat and thought about current, wind, sun and luck. And, I thought about the difference in things I said to students as opposed to things I was smart enough to do. I looked out at the churning sea and wondered where I'd be if I hadn't been lucky. I vowed from that day on to swim upcurrent at the beginning of my dives and to pay attention to even slight changes in weather and water conditions—just like my instructor had told me to. 

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